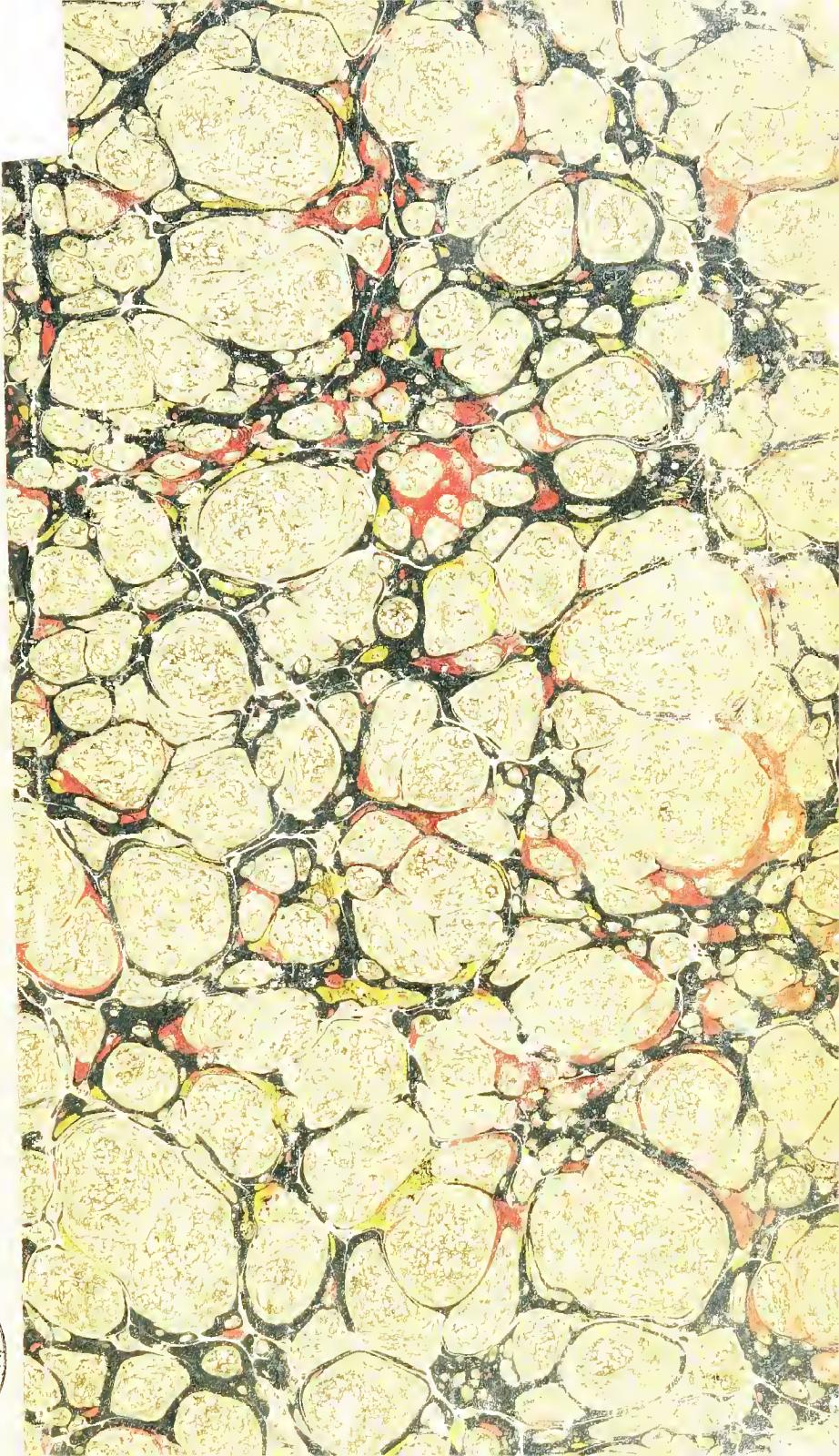


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# The Epistemological Function of the “Thing in Itself” in Kant’s Philosophy

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## A THESIS

Presented to the University Faculty of Cornell  
University in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy,  
May, 1895



BY  
**ALBERT ROSS HILL**

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## *P R E F A C E*

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*AT the time of presenting this thesis to the Faculty of Cornell University for the doctorate, in the spring of 1895, I hoped to be able to return to the subject and make what I had done the basis for a more extensive investigation. I was especially anxious to enquire into the functions of the "thing in itself" in other portions of the Critical Philosophy. But the press of other duties has prevented me from carrying out this plan and the thesis is now published in the form in which it was first written.*

*My obligations to various writers have been acknowledged throughout the thesis itself, and in addition I am deeply indebted to Professor J. E. Creighton of Cornell University, for inspiration, criticism, and guidance in the course of its preparation. For the positions taken, however, I am alone responsible.*

*A. R. H.*

# The Epistemological Function of the “Thing in Itself” in Kant’s Philosophy

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## INTRODUCTION

To Kant’s mind, the failure of all previous philosophy to construct a permanent system, and the frequent return of scepticism as the prevailing attitude of investigators in that field, was due to what he conceived to be a vain attempt to establish knowledge on the assumption that our ideas of the object should conform to the nature of the object itself. He will proceed, accordingly, on the opposite assumption, viz., that the subject determines the object, that instead of our ideas being conformed to the nature of the object, the object of knowledge is itself determined by the manner in which the mind, by its very nature, receives and works up the materials supplied it.<sup>1</sup> This change of standpoint led Kant to seek for the forms or modes of perception and judgment which guide us in the knowing of objects. And since these forms or modes, as belonging to the nature of the mind, determine the manner in which we perceive and know, it follows as a matter of course, thought Kant, that we can never know things *as they are in themselves*, but only the manner in which they appear to us, i. e., their phenomena.

The vast *a priori* machinery employed by Kant in his “construction of the object” seems to have so overshadowed in his own mind, as it has in the minds of his students and interpreters since, the question of the contribution of the object itself (the “thing in itself”) to that construction that we are given no explicit statements by Kant in the matter; and, to my knowledge, no systematic investigation of the problem has been undertaken by any one of the host of writers, small and great, who have professed to furnish us with expositions of his system. Accordingly it does not seem superfluous to institute an inquiry into ‘the Epistemologi-

<sup>1</sup>Kant’s Werke, Vol. III, pp. 17 ff (Hartenstein).

N. B. All references to Kant’s works are to Hartenstein’s Edition.

cal function of the ‘thing in itself’ in Kant’s philosophy,” as this essay aims to do. Here we shall not be concerned so much with the question whether Kant believed in the existence of *things in themselves* as with this other, how much or how little does the so-called ‘thing in itself’ contribute to our knowledge of objects? If it should be found that it contributes nothing at all, that for knowledge it has no function, then it will be time enough to ask, does the ‘thing in itself’ exist for Kant? And if so, how does he arrive at this conclusion?

If we adopt the terminology of common sense and call the *a priori* forms of Sensibility and the categories of the Understanding *subjective*, we may say that this essay aims to be an enquiry into the *objective* factors of knowledge, as set forth or implied in the philosophy of Kant. It will have to deal, then, primarily, with such questions as these:—What function has the ‘thing in itself’ in determining the form of objects in experience and their relations to one another? Is there any characteristic in things which has an influence in the determination of the spatial relations of objects? Or even if the mind bring to objects their general spatial quality, what about the particular space forms? Are these due to the action of the ‘thing in itself’ upon sensibility, otherwise than the general quality of extension is? In the case of the categories, too, must the mind be regarded as the sole agent in their adaptation, or, is the cue for their employment given in sense? And further, as the only means of finding an answer to the above questions, we must decide whether Kant attributed to the ‘thing in itself’ the function of so affecting the senses as to produce sensations within us.

These and similar questions will be of primary importance, and others will be discussed only in so far as an answer to them may serve to elucidate Kant’s thought concerning the former, or the implications of his general theory of knowledge as bearing on the main problem of the thesis.

The greater part of the materials for the answer to our questions must, of course, be sought in the Critique of Pure Reason, since here alone do we find what Kant himself would have been willing to recognize as his system of Epistemology. The Prolegomena, however, written presumably from the same point of view and in fact intended by Kant himself as a sort of popular expo-

sition of the main principles of the Critique, may afford us some hints at least in our enquiry. And furthermore, whatever advantage arises from the historical treatment of a problem may be gained from a glance at Kant's earlier Epistemological writings, since he seems to exemplify in his own philosophical development almost the whole history of philosophy in outline.<sup>1</sup> In particular, his Inaugural Dissertation of 1770, signalizing as it does a turning point in Kant's philosophizing and yielding us for the first time in the history of his thought the explicit distinction between phenomena and things in themselves or noumena, may be worthy of more than a passing notice, since here we are introduced to that "method" of enquiry whose full fruitage is the Critique of Pure Reason. Accordingly, the first chapter of this thesis will be devoted to an outline of the historical development of Kant's Epistemology from the beginning of his literary activity till the time of the first publication of the Critique, with particular attention to the Inaugural Dissertation. After that we can proceed directly to a discussion of the main problem of the thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> Windelband-Geschichte der Philosophie, Vol. II, p. 15.

## CHAPTER I.

### KANT'S EPISTEMOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT (1755-1781)

SECTION 1. Kant's mental history is divided, somewhat roughly, by Paulsen,<sup>1</sup> —and Caird<sup>2</sup> and Kuno Fischer<sup>3</sup> make practically the same division—into three periods. Previous to 1760 Kant is an adherent “though a somewhat restless and dissatisfied adherent” of the Leibnitz-Wolffian Rationalism. Being at this time little interested in Epistemological problems, he has left us, to represent this period, only one short treatise that is of importance for our purpose, the Dissertation by which he qualified for teaching in 1755—“*Principiorum Primorum Cognitionis Metaphysicae Nova Dilucidatio*”. In this he defends that Rationalism whose chief Epistemological dogma may be said in general to be that *Reason is capable in her own strength of revealing the nature of things*. He shares with it too the general confusion as revealed by all the German philosophers from Leibnitz to Kant,<sup>4</sup> concerning the relation of the two principles which they attribute to the use of reason—that of *contradiction* and that of *sufficient ground or reason*.<sup>5</sup> On the one side he sets up the former as the highest principle of all truth,<sup>6</sup> and attempts to demonstrate the validity of the latter, thus identifying it in a last resort with the principle of contradiction.<sup>7</sup> This would leave Kant a consistent rationalist like Spinoza: the ground of knowledge would be identical with the cause in things.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, Kant denies outright the identity of cause and ground,<sup>9</sup> and treats the principle of sufficient reason as at least partially independent of that of contradiction.<sup>10</sup> The same might thus be said of Kant at this stage in his development as has been said of Wolff to whose school he now belongs, viz., that in reality he has no theory of knowledge at all.<sup>11</sup> So much, however, the attempted defense of Rationalism in this essay has

<sup>1</sup> Versuch ein Entwicklungsgeschichte d. K. Erkenntniss theorie, p. 1-4.

<sup>2</sup> Caird's Critical Philosophy of Kant, Vol. I, pp. 65-67.

<sup>3</sup> Kuno Fischer—Gesch. d. neueren Phil. Vol. III, p. ?

<sup>4</sup> Zeller, Gesch. d. Phil. in Deutschland seit Leibnitz, pp. 147 ff.

<sup>5</sup> Paulsen's Versuch etc., p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Kant's Werke I, p. 377.

<sup>7</sup> Werke I, p. 374.

<sup>8</sup> Paulsen's Versuch etc., p. 34.

<sup>9</sup> Werke I, pp. 377 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Caird, Crit. Phil. I, pp. 186 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Zeller, Gesch. d. Phil. p. 218.

done for Kant: it has brought him face to face with the problem concerning the connection of thought and reality. On reflection upon this problem and the implications of his inherited Rationalism in regard to it, he seems to have been led to see the inadequacy of his first answer and the vacillating attitude of his school.

SECTION II. The principle of Sufficient Reason proved to be the stimulating block for Kant.<sup>1</sup> Setting out from a criticism of this principle, we find him in his writings between 1762 and 1766 gradually developing in the direction of Empiricism, at least so far as that doctrine is negative, *denying the possibility of arriving at a knowledge of things by means of pure reason*. This is Kant's attitude during the second period of his mental development.<sup>2</sup> It is represented by four treatises written during the years 1762-3, viz: "The False Subtilty of the Four Syllogistic Figures," "The Sole Ground for the Demonstration of the Being of God," an essay "On the Evidence of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals," and "An Attempt to Introduce the Conception of Negative Quantity into Philosophy."<sup>3</sup> To these should also be added "Dreams of a Ghost-Seer as illustrated by the Dreams of Metaphysic" published three years later.

At the end of this period we find Kant practically declaring war against that Rationalism from which he had himself set out. And yet "the despairing renunciation of Rationalism which shows itself in the 'Dreams' is only the final result of a course of investigation which is already begun in the 'Dilucidatio Nova'; and the intervening treatises enable us to connect the latter with the former almost without a break."<sup>4</sup> In the first of these treatises Kant points out that the movement of thought is purely analytic, proceeding according to the principle of Contradiction.<sup>5</sup> And in the second, he goes on to enforce that lesson and its consequences for the prevailing Rationalism by contending that it is impossible by means of this principle alone to bridge the gulf between thought and reality.<sup>6</sup>

Following upon this is a criticism, in the prize essay

<sup>1</sup> Paulsen's Versuch etc., pp. I and 37 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Caird, Crit. Phil. of Kant, Vol. I, pp. 116-160; cf. also Paulsen's Versuch, etc., pp. 2 and 37-100.

<sup>3</sup> That the above is the order in which these treatises were written has been established by Benno Erdmann, Reflexionen Kant's, Introduction to Vol. II, pp. 17 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Caird, Crit. Phil. Vol. I, p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> Werke II, p. 57.

<sup>6</sup> Werke II, pp. 115-117.

"On the Evidence of the Principles of Natural Theology and Morals," of the method employed by his predecessors of the Eighteenth Century. They, inspired by the great success of mathematical science, had been led to suppose that the same method might be employed to advantage in Metaphysics, and the result of their attempt had been fatal to the interests of philosophy.<sup>1</sup> The business of philosophy, Kant thinks, is to analyse and make clear given conceptions, while that of mathematics is, by means of arbitrary syntheses, to produce conceptions that are not given. Hence, the method of the latter cannot be applied in the investigations of the former. And in connexion with these conclusions concerning the method of philosophy, Kant claims that, while she has only one *formal* principle, viz., that of contradiction, there must be many *material* principles of knowledge.<sup>2</sup> There must be a large number of fundamental, though often obscure conceptions, to the analysis of which philosophy is called.

In the fourth treatise of the year 1763, the Epistemological results of the preceding three are more clearly asserted and Kant's break with the old Rationalism is no longer half-hearted but decided and clear. He has already told us that the movement of pure thought is solely analytic, that demonstration guided by the law of identity or contradiction can only analyze what is given, and must therefore start with many indemonstrable principles; and that, accordingly, pure thought or reason is unable in its own strength to get beyond itself and make connection with objective reality. And now, in the treatise under discussion, he not only enforces still more clearly the above lessons but also goes beyond them by telling us in effect that, while the movement of pure thought is analytic, that of knowledge is sympathetic.<sup>3</sup> Kant holds consistently now to the distinction between logical ground and cause in things. And since the identity of these was, more or less clearly, the presupposition of all previous Rationalism, he may surely be said to have ceased to be a Rationalist. Is he then, at this stage in his development an Empiricist?

Kant does not give us a positive answer to this question in the treatise concerning "Negative Quality";

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<sup>1</sup> Werke II, pp. 291 ff. Cf. also Werke III, pp. 15 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Werke II, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Werke II, pp. 103-106. Cf. also Caird, Critical Philosophy of Kant, Vol. I, pp. 128 ff; and Paulsen's Versuch etc., pp. 38 ff.

but one might suppose that when he denies the ability of reason to give us knowledge of facts, he must either conceive a third possibility or attribute that power to experience. At all events, this latter is his answer in the "Dreams" published three years later, with which may be compared a letter to Mendelsohn on April 8th of the same year (1766).<sup>1</sup> In the "Dreams" he says: "The fundamental conceptions of things as causes and of their forces and actions are quite arbitrary when not taken from experience, and apart from experience we can never prove nor disprove them"<sup>2</sup> Again in the letter just mentioned Kant asks: "Is it possible by reason to discover a primitive force, i. e. the first fundamental relation of a cause and an effect? I answer with certainty that it is impossible. Hence, I am reduced to the conclusion that except in so far as such forces are given in experience they are only fictions of imagination."<sup>3</sup>

And yet there is a great difference between Kant's frame of mind at this time and the attitude of Hume toward the problem of causality. Both Kant and Hume appeal to experience as the sole source of all knowledge of "matters of fact," but they understand experience quite differently. For Hume experience is made up of a vast number of isolated and particular impressions and ideas. Each of these constituents exists in its own right and is received into the mind in its own particularity. But from what has been quoted from Kant it will be seen that his view is a quite different one. Experience yields for him not only impressions but also their arrangement. The connexion of cause and effect is mentioned by him as one of the facts learned from experience, the very connexion which Hume declared could not be derived from any impression. So that we may state the difference between Kant at this time and the great Empiricist, as follows: Kant holds that, except in so far as the relation of cause and effect is given in experience, it is only a fiction of the imagination. Hume said the same. It still remained for Kant to go a step further and say with Hume: such a relation cannot be given in experience and therefore it is a fiction of the imagination. Now it was just

<sup>1</sup> Werke VIII, pp. 672 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Werke II, p. 378 cf. Paulsen's Versuch, etc., p. 44; and Caird's Critical Philosophy of Kant, Vol. I, p. 154.

<sup>3</sup> Werke VIII, p. 674.

this step which Kant, though perhaps unwittingly, refused to take. It would seem as if at the time of writing the "Dreams," this atomistic view of sensations had never occurred to Kant. He looks upon experience quite naively and proclaims that all knowledge of forces and their actions must be derived from experience if it is to be worth anything.

It seems highly probable that the most powerful influence of Hume upon our philosopher must be ascribed to the time immediately following the publication of the "Dreams."<sup>1</sup> Though he has been acquainted with English Empiricism and no doubt with Hume himself for some time, yet now he is first awakened from his "dogmatic slumber" by discovering in the scepticism of Hume the necessary consequences of his own appeal to experience in opposition to the Rationalism under which he had been educated. Kant has only to see that experience, in the sense of sensations, can never give us apodictically certain and universally valid propositions in order to reject it as the sole means of gaining a knowledge of things.

But the possibility of such knowledge will not be given up by Kant without a struggle. He has demonstrated the inadequacy of the old dogmatic *Rationalism*; the *sceptical* results of Hume's investigation have taught him that in perception his ideal of knowledge cannot be realized; but nothing daunted Kant applies himself to a new explanation of how we may arrive at a knowledge of things. With this explanation we enter upon the *third period* in the development of Kant's thought, which opens with the publication of his Inaugural Dissertation in 1770, and ends for Epistemology, with the second edition of the Critique of Pure Reason in 1787.

SECTION 3. In the Dissertation we meet for the first time in the history of Kant's thought, with the

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Fischer (*Gesch. d. u. Phil.* III, pp. 178 and 254) and also Zeller (*Gesch. d. deut. Phil. etc.*, p. 417) are inclined to place the influence of Hume as early as 1763. But while he undoubtedly knew something of Hume at that time, it seems certain, as they admit, that Hume's doubts had not yet taken much hold upon him. (With this compare Paulsen's *Versuch*, etc., p. 100 and a few passages preceding). On the other hand, Caird (*Crit. Phil. of Kant I*, pp. 201 ff) following Benno Erdmann (in an article in *Archiv f. Gesch. d. Phil.*), finds that the awakening of which Kant himself speaks occurs after the publication of the Dissertation. Caird quotes from Kant to prove that it was in the universalization of Hume's problem that he first found light and that universalization first took place in the Critique. In the same quotation, however, Kant says that he had already assured himself that these principles e. g. causality come not from experience but from the mind itself, and this he knew when he wrote the Dissertation, as we shall see. It seems probable, then, that Hume's influence began to be felt at the time and in the way we have suggested, that not till afterwards, however, was its full significance realized and Kant driven to go beyond the Dissertation to the Critique.

distinction between phenomena and noumena, and indeed in the same form in which it is found in Plato and other ancient writers, as Kant himself remarks. Like them, Kant bases that distinction upon the difference in the organs by means of which they are known. The *senses* give us things only as they appear to us or *phenomena*, the *understanding* things as they are or *noumena*.<sup>1</sup>

Leibnitz had made somewhat the same distinction between Sensibility and Understanding,<sup>2</sup> but claimed for the former the ability to arrive at an obscure knowledge of things. Kant, however, makes the distinction absolute and opposes in strong terms the position held by Leibnitz.<sup>3</sup> For Kant sensibility is passive, the understanding active; the former receptive, the latter spontaneous.<sup>4</sup>

If now we inquire for the motive which led Kant to recast this distinction of Leibnitz before adopting it as the foundation of his own system, we find, I think, that it is akin to that which led him to reject his own empiricism, or, rather, which prevented him from ever actually becoming an empiricist. Reflexion upon what is implied in empiricism shows that it must doubt the applicability of mathematics to the objects of experience,<sup>5</sup> a doubt which Kant seems to have been never able to entertain. And on the other hand, since mathematics is sensuous knowledge it affords an argument against the view of Leibnitz that all sensuous knowledge is obscure; for mathematics was to the whole eighteenth century the type of clear demonstration. So if Kant is to adopt this distinction of Leibnitz, there remains no alternative but to transform it and make it absolute.<sup>6</sup> Thus results his theory of the receptivity of sense and the spontaneity of thought as fundamental to his system, both as enunciated in the Dissertation and as remodeled and further developed in the Critique of Pure Reason.<sup>7</sup>

Having noted then the point of most importance for us in this treatise of Kant, viz., the absolute distinction

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<sup>1</sup> Werke II, p. 400 (sections 3 and 4 of Dissertation).

<sup>2</sup> Nouveaux Essais Book IV, chapter 3.

<sup>3</sup> Werke II, pp. 400-402.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, pp. 52 and 82.

<sup>5</sup> I do not mean that it is on this point *alone* that Kant objects to the results of empiricism, but for the present purpose it seems of most importance. See Werke IV, p. 20, and Paulsen's Versuch, etc., pp. 132, 136, and 141.

<sup>6</sup> cf. Windleband, Gesch. d. Phil. Vol. II, p. 32; also an article in Vierteljahrsschrift, Vol. I, p. 239, "Verschiedene Phasen d. Kant'schen Lehre vom Ding an Sich."

<sup>7</sup> cf. Caird, Crit. Phil. Vol. I, p. 171 and Paulsen's Versuch, etc., p. 115.

between sense and thought, and the revival in connection with that of the old Platonic division of all objects into phenomena and noumena, let us now go on to enquire more fully into Kant's theory of knowledge in regard to each of these classes of objects.

In the case of sensuous knowledge we must distinguish the *matter* from the *form*.<sup>1</sup> The former is given in the sensation, which is due to the action of an object upon the sensibility. The latter, on the other hand, is due to the activity of the mind, according to whose laws the raw material of sensations is formed into orderly perceptions. The laws or forms to which all perception must conform are *Space* and *Time*,<sup>2</sup> which are thus not qualities of *things in themselves* but only forms of perception under which all things must appear to us.

In anticipation we may here add that the intellect has also a function to perform in relation to these perceptions. By the logical use of the understanding they are subordinated to conceptions, which conceptions are themselves often won by a process of abstraction from perceptions, and thus the whole of experience is formed.<sup>3</sup>

What is of particular interest to us here, however, is the doctrine that space and time are not qualities of things, but forms which the mind brings to perceptions. They are not abstracted from experience as presenting to us objects in space and time, but through them our spatial and temporal experience is rendered possible. If such forms were not contributed by the mind, the perception of objects as beside one another in space and after one another in time, would not be possible.<sup>4</sup>

It would seem, then, that the object has no function here in the determination of those qualities which Locke designated as primary, though Kant himself does not seem to have ever raised the question whether any quality exists in the thing in virtue of which its action upon our sensibility leads us to perceive it not only as in space, but also endowed with a shape peculiar to itself. Doubtless the question never entered into Kant's mind, after having once decided that all form comes from the mind, and why should it? Nor does Kant give any explicit answer to this question in the Critique, though, I

<sup>1</sup> Werke II, p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> Werke II, p. 405 (section 13 of Dissertation).

<sup>3</sup> Werke II, p. 401 (section 5, end).

<sup>4</sup> Werke II, pp. 406-413 (sections 14 and 15 of Dissertation).

think, we shall find that the implications of his theory are quite unmistakable. But of this again.

We must further ask, does Kant mean to imply, in his theory that sensation gives us the *unformed* matter of perception, that sensation reveals to us the true qualities of the object? In other words, is Kant's theory of the phenomenal nature of sensuous knowledge a conclusion from the *apriority* of space and time? If it is, then the former question must be answered in the affirmative; since we should only have to abstract from the forms of space and time in order to get at the real qualities of things, if *their* presence alone renders phenomenal all our perception of objects. It cannot be that such is Kant's position. Notice what he says in Section 4 of the Dissertation: "Since whatever is in sensuous knowledge depends upon the subject's peculiar nature, as the latter is capable of receiving some modification or other from the presence of objects which, on account of subjective variety, may be different in different subjects, whilst whatever knowledge is exempt from such subjective conditions, regards the object only; it is plain that what is sensuously thought is the representation of *things as they appear*, while the intellectual presentations are the representations of *things as they are*."<sup>1</sup>

From the above quotation it will be seen that the argument for the phenomenal nature of sensuous knowledge is based on the fact that each person possesses his own peculiar organization, not on the theory of the *apriority* of space and time. The statement which I have just quoted is made before Kant has ever mentioned space or time,<sup>2</sup> even before he has made the distinction between *form* and *matter* of perception. Thus Kant's conclusion as to the phenomenal character of all human perception does not follow from his peculiar theory of space and time, but, rather, from a point of view, which is by no means new, and which is most clearly expressed by Kant, himself, in the Prolegomena: "It is surely inconceivable how the perception of a present thing should enable me to know it as it is in itself, seeing that its properties cannot pass over into my presentative faculty."<sup>3</sup>

If Kant's only reason for regarding sensuous knowl-

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<sup>1</sup> Werke II, p. 400.

<sup>2</sup> These forms of the sensible world are first mentioned as such in section 13 (II, 405).

<sup>3</sup> Werke IV, p. 31 (section 9 of Prol.).

edge as phenomenal were that all perception must conform to the *a priori* forms of space and time, then the so-called secondary qualities would represent the true nature of things. I mention this point here because I think we shall find it of importance in dealing with that phase of our inquiry which will come within the second chapter of this essay.<sup>1</sup> The doctrine of the *apriority* of space at least seems to have been of importance to Kant chiefly as a means of establishing the *apodictic certainty* and *universal validity* of mathematical propositions in their application to objects of perception,<sup>2</sup> and this question does not concern us here. It gives Kant an opportunity to re-instate, even if in a modified form, the Rationalism which he had been so loath to give up, though for sensuous knowledge the qualification is now necessary: *only for things as they appear*, not as they are in themselves.

Turning now to the other source of knowledge, the intellectual, we find that, according to the Dissertation, the intellect has a double use—a *logical* and a *real*.<sup>3</sup> The logical use we have already noted: it consists in still further transforming our perceptions into experience by subordinating them to conceptions.

But the real use of the intellect, and this is the important one for us, is to produce *pure concepts*. These are won by paying heed to those laws which the mind employs in experience, such as Possibility, Necessity, Substance, Cause, etc. Such concepts are not to be sought in the senses, but in the pure intellect. They are not to be found as parts of any sensuous perception, but are won for consciousness, as indicated above, through reflexion upon that experience in the formation of which they have already been unconsciously employed. Their validity is thus established by Kant on the same ground which Hume appealed to in rejecting them, viz., because they are not found in sensations as such.<sup>4</sup>

Having made the distinction mentioned above between sense and understanding, Kant concludes, as we have seen, that while the senses give us things as they appear only, or phenomena, the understanding by means

<sup>1</sup> I may say in advance that in the "Aesthetic" also I find no evidence for the ordinary interpretation that Kant concludes the unknowability of things from the *apriority* of space and time.

<sup>2</sup> That it is the *applicability* of Mathematics for which Kant particularly contends is emphasized by Paulsen—Versuch, pp. 6-8.

<sup>3</sup> Werke II, p. 402 (section 8),

<sup>4</sup> Paulsen's Versuch, etc., pp. 106 ff.

of its concepts reveals to us noumena or things as they are. As Kant says himself in a letter to Herz,<sup>1</sup> the question how this latter is possible is not considered here. Kant seems to have simply adopted the standpoint of Antiquity whereby the phenomenon or object of sense is distinguished from the noumenon or object of the intellect,<sup>2</sup> and this notwithstanding the fact that he had seen the inability of pure thought to connect itself with the nature of things.<sup>3</sup>

In connection with Kant's doctrine in the Dissertation, I wish to call attention particularly to his notion of a *noumenon*. It is, as we have seen, an *intelligible thing*, capable of definite determinations by means of the pure concepts of the understanding. These pure concepts or laws are the same as those afterwards given in the table of the categories in the Critique, so that in this connection there is a marked difference between the standpoints of 1770 and 1781. It is briefly this: in the Dissertation these laws of the mind apply to things in themselves, noumena. There is an objective principle in the intellect<sup>4</sup> by means of which it can get at the very essence of things. In the Critique, on the other hand, the function of these categories is limited to the sensuous materials given us in experience, and the understanding is thus forever shut off from an acquaintance with things as they are. Here, then, there is no place for a *noumenon* in the sense in which that term is employed in the Dissertation. In the Critique there are no *intelligible things*. Hence, while in the Dissertation the terms *noumenon* and '*thing in itself*' are used synonymously, there is a wide difference between *noumenon* as used in the Dissertation and '*thing in itself*' as found in the Critique. The former is a definitely determined thing, the latter is perfectly indeterminate. This point is only mentioned here but will be more fully discussed when we come to deal with these terms in the Critique.

The reasons for such a change of standpoint as has been indicated can be found, I think, in the Dissertation itself, and need not be traced to any outer influence. In the first place, it could not escape the notice of Kant,

<sup>1</sup> Werke VIII, p. 689.

<sup>2</sup> Werke II, p. 400.

<sup>3</sup> See above p. 12. Paulsen (*Versuch*, etc., p. 124) finds in this an evidence of the unwillingness of Kant to give up the dogma of the knowability of things.

<sup>4</sup> Werke II, p. 405 (section 13).

on the slightest reflection, that in the second part of his theory in the Dissertation he has returned directly and without any justification to the old Dogmatism from which he had set out, in that he claims for pure thought the ability to know things as they are. In short, his new theory involves a Pre-established Harmony,<sup>1</sup> and the recognition of this would surely be enough to lead to its abandonment, since Kant always looked on such a Metaphysical theory as entirely unphilosophical.

Further he must see that in distinguishing space and time as *forms* of sensibility from the *matter* given in sensation, he has placed space and time in an analogous position to that of the intellectual forms. If, then, the former refer to phenomena only, why should not the latter share the same fate?

Toward the close of the Dissertation, Kant shows that he is dissatisfied with the results of the inquiry so far as Metaphysics is concerned, Metaphysics being with him the science of the pure concepts.<sup>2</sup> In a letter to Lambert<sup>3</sup> also, he says that the whole of his results on the positive side must be regarded as provisional. The value of the Dissertation lies, Kant claims, in the removal of space and time from things in themselves, while ultimately this side of his doctrine exists only for the sake of the positive or Metaphysical side.

Besides, as Caird points out,<sup>4</sup> while criticising the perceived world from the point of view of intelligence, he also shows himself dissatisfied with the knowledge of noumena by means of pure intelligence; for he regards knowledge gained from concepts alone as imperfect, since it is merely general and cannot be realized *in concreto* in perception.<sup>5</sup> Here Kant already sets up as the ideal for intelligence an *intellectual perception* which shall overcome the disadvantages of both perception and intelligence as we human beings have them. Only an intelligence to which perception and conception were the same, whose relationship to things in themselves would be the same as that of perception to phenomena, i. e. their creator, could satisfy the demand which Kant here makes upon thought.<sup>6</sup> Thus while

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<sup>1</sup> Windelband, *Gesch. d. neueren Phil.* Vol. II, p. 41.

<sup>2</sup> Werke II, p. 415, section 22. cf. Werke III, p. 5, and Benno Erdmann in *Phil. Monatshefte* XIX, p. 133.

<sup>3</sup> Werke VIII, p. 663.

<sup>4</sup> Crit. Phil. Vol. I, pp. 185-7.

<sup>5</sup> Werke II, p. 419, section 25.

<sup>6</sup> Windelband in *Vierteljahrsschrift I*, p. 247.

nominally holding to the doctrine of the knowableness of things by means of pure conception, Kant has already practically given it up and said in effect: only God can know things as they are.

The famous letter to Herz,<sup>1</sup> written on February 21st, 1772, shows to some extent how these difficulties shaped themselves in Kant's mind; and after such a view as we have taken of his preceding development it will not seem strange to us that they center around the problem how our ideas may refer to objects. "I put this question to myself, on what ground rests the relation of that in us which we call an idea to objects? . . . It is intelligible how our ideas, so far as they are sensuous affections passively received, should have a relation to objects, and also how the *forms* of sense, though borrowed from the nature of our soul, should nevertheless apply to all things in so far as they are presented in sense. . . . But now we must ask in what other way an idea is possible which refers to an object without being the effect of an impression from that object? I ventured in the Dissertation to say that the ideas of sense represent *things as they appear*, while the conceptions of the understanding represent *things as they are*. But how can the ideas of these things be given to us if not by the manner in which they affect us? Whence the agreement which these ideas are supposed to have with objects which are yet not their products? How can pure reason lay down axioms about things without any experience of them? etc."<sup>2</sup>

Kant does not even pretend to solve the difficulty here, or give us an answer to these questions which he has raised, but the solution comes in the Critique of Pure Reason: the pure concepts of the understanding just as the pure forms of sensibility can refer only to phenomena.

Here, then, we have the general standpoint of the third period in Kant's development, viz., *there is knowledge by means of pure reason but of phenomena only, not of things as they are in themselves*.

Having now traced the development of Kant's Epistemology from its beginnings to the standpoint of his final system, let us here attempt to sum up what we have found to be his attitude to the relation of thought

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<sup>1</sup> Werke VIII, pp 688 ff.  
<sup>2</sup> Werke VIII, pp 689-690.

and reality in each of the three stages in that development.

In the first period, thought can reach the essence of things by following the principles of contradiction and sufficient reason. As the latter is not regarded as dependent upon experience it would seem that thought alone is able to reveal the qualities of things in themselves, those qualities not differing from our conceptions of them. On such a supposition the 'thing in itself' need perform no function whatever in knowledge, since Reason can construct the whole world of Reality out of its own resources, that world agreeing with the concepts of pure thought. Here there is no room for Epistemology, there can be no question of how thought or ideas can refer to reality, since they are the same.

In the second period, however, Kant finds it necessary to base the second principle of reason on experience, since "matters of fact" can only be determined in that way. Reason now being left with the sole principle of contradiction, can deal only with its own conceptions and can never give us things as they are. Its function is thus not nearly so important as in the earlier period, and a corresponding increase of responsibility for knowledge is thrown upon things. Inasmuch as Kant did not along with his Empiricism adopt the atomistic view of experience as made up of a number of isolated sensations, it would seem that at this time the 'thing in itself' has a most important function for knowledge. In sensation it gives us not only its own qualities, but also the laws of its relations to other things. Of course the above is simply inference from Kant's main doctrines since he did not deal at all explicitly with our question, nor indeed could he until he had himself carefully drawn the distinction which he made later between 'thing in itself' and phenomenon.

Finally at the standpoint at which we have now arrived, our knowledge can refer only to the world of experience, real or possible, and that not of things in themselves but only of phenomena. It remains to enquire what function the 'thing in itself' has to perform for knowledge in this the final stage of Kant's thought.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE FUNCTION OF THE 'THING IN ITSELF' IN THE DETERMINATION OF THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY QUALITIES OF OBJECTS.

SECTION 1. That space and time are not qualities of things in themselves but of phenomena only has already been shown to be the chief negative result of Kant's Inaugural Dissertation. In the Critique of Pure Reason, too, that part entitled "Transcendental Aesthetic" enforces the same doctrine, the reasons given for its acceptance being practically the same here as there. The later work, however, presents in more systematic form and in clearer light what is contained in germ in the earlier.

In the Aesthetic Kant first seeks to prove that space and time are *a priori* perceptions not empirical concepts. The several arguments by means of which he seeks to establish such a conclusion need not here be mentioned or discussed.<sup>1</sup> But the corollary that space and time are not qualities of things<sup>2</sup> must be considered. The argument on this point runs somewhat as follows:

In the first place, on no other justifiable supposition can the *fact* (to Kant's mind) of *a priori* knowledge of space and time be explained. "For no determinations of objects, whether belonging to them absolutely or in relation to others, can enter our perception before the actual existence of the objects themselves, that is to say, they can never be perceptions *a priori*."<sup>3</sup> Now space and time have been shown to be *a priori* perceptions so they cannot be qualities in things.

But what do we mean by saying that they are *a priori* perceptions? Perception implies the presence of the object. *A priori* perception would therefore seem to be a contradiction in terms. The solution of this apparent contradiction is that space and time are just *forms* of perception, modes of sensibility to which all perception must be subject, but that they bear no resemblance to any characteristic of things as they are. Thus the fact of *a priori* knowledge of space and time

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, pp 58-61 and 64-66 cf. Werke III, pp 72-79.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, pp 61-64 and 66-68.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p 61 cf. pp 67 and 72 ff. This quotation seems to me to sum up Kant's argument in the Aesthetic for the phenomenality of space and time.

serves as sufficient proof that they refer to phenomena only.<sup>1</sup>

Further, Kant argues, even if space and time were empirical concepts, they could not be determinations of things as they are; for "it is surely inconceivable how the perception of a present thing should enable me to know it as it is in itself, seeing that its properties cannot pass over into my representative faculty."<sup>2</sup> As noticed above in our discussion of the Dissertation,<sup>3</sup> a similar view is to be met with there. Not only space and time but all our subjective conditions determine the nature of the qualities which we perceive in objects, so that "if we drop our subject or subjective form of our senses, all qualities . . . . would vanish."<sup>4</sup> Hence we know nothing but our manner of perceiving objects, not the objects as they are in themselves.

This latter argument of Kant holds, as may be seen from the above quotation, of those qualities also which, before his time, had been known as secondary, such as colour, taste, smell, etc. These had already been shown to be "modifications only of our sensibility;" and Kant claims that his doctrine of the Ideality of all the qualities of the objects of experience, primary and secondary alike, is from one point of view simply an extension of the teachings of Locke. So far then Kant's position does not differ essentially from that of Berkeley, if we leave out of account Berkeley's further Metaphysical conclusions.

But from another point of view Kant proceeds to re-establish the distinction of Locke between primary and secondary qualities. Both kinds of qualities do indeed refer to phenomena only, things as they appear to us, not to things as they are in themselves. Yet within experience there is an essential difference between them. "With the exception of space there is no other subjective representation referring to something external that would be called *a priori objective*."<sup>5</sup> Understanding here by the word "objective" the signification given to it by Kant throughout his Epistemology, viz. that which is "universal and necessary,"<sup>6</sup> we find that it is in strict agreement with his general teaching on the nature of the various qualities of empirical objects.

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p 61 and IV pp 30-31 (Sections 8 and 9 of Prolegomena.)

<sup>2</sup> Werke IV, p 31. <sup>3</sup> pp 21-22 above.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p 72.

<sup>5</sup> Werke III, p 63. <sup>6</sup> Werke III, pp 73 and 74 cf. also Werke III, p 179 and IV, p 47.

Space and Time are forms under which *all* human perception takes place. We human beings could never perceive anything except "under the indefeasible conditions of space and time."<sup>1</sup> You cannot even imagine an object, says Kant, without attributing to it spatial determinations and giving it some position in space and time. They are thus universal conditions of experience, without which all perception of objects as we have it would be impossible. They render experience itself possible.<sup>2</sup>

The secondary qualities, on the other hand, are "accidentally added effects only of our peculiar organization."<sup>3</sup> They may differ for different subjects or for the same subject at different times. Further, they are dependent on experience i. e. on sensations, so are not representations *a priori*. "No one can have *a priori* an idea either of colour or of taste, but space refers to the pure form of perception only and involves no kind of sensation, nothing empirical."<sup>4</sup>

From the foregoing it seems evident that while Kant places both primary and secondary qualities on the same plane as not belonging to things in themselves, he yet introduces the old distinction from a new point of view by calling the former *a priori* and the latter *a posteriori* and dependent on sensation.

SECTION 2. Having noticed in a general way Kant's doctrine of the phenomenal nature of all the qualities of objects to be met with in our experience, it is now in order to examine his statements with a view to an answer to *our* particular question, viz., what does the 'thing in itself' contribute to the perception of these two kinds of qualities respectively? We have seen that none of them can be looked upon as determinations of things in themselves, but the question still remains: have they then any basis in the nature of things? Is there any corresponding characteristic in things which, though itself neither space, time, nor any empirical quality, yet on being presented to the mind is read off, so to speak, as this or that quality of the object before us in perception?

First as to space and time, it seems clear from what has been already said that these can have nothing

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p 72 cf. also pp 73 and 74.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p 59 and 65.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p 63.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p 63 cf. also p 164.

in common with the nature of things. To treat them as *a priori* and entirely independent of sensation in contrast with the secondary qualities which are *a posteriori* and dependent on sensation<sup>1</sup> is equal to saying that the former are purely mind given. Kant would surely not admit that space or time can be objective in any sense, not even a corresponding quality in things could be allowed by him. He warns us against such an interpretation of his doctrine by contrasting, as above noticed, space with such qualities of objects as colour, taste, etc. Proofs of the ideality of space and time based on the analogy of the other qualities are quite insufficient.<sup>2</sup> We have undoubtedly a capacity for sensing objects as coloured, but that does not alone constitute a claim to *a priority*, in Kant's meaning, for colour. Colour, taste, etc., all those qualities which were previously termed secondary, are considered *a posteriori*; they are given in the sensation, not imparted to it. But this view of the primary qualities has an important inference attaching to it in regard to the secondary. The former we have seen are purely mind given and have no basis whatever in the nature of things. The consequence of this is that Kant is deprived of the usual method of explaining the secondary as due to certain modifications and combinations of the spatial attributes. For since space is no attribute of things in themselves, it will not do to offer this as an explanation of the variety or even the presence of such sensations in consciousness. Only on one hypothesis would such a view be reconcilable with Kant's doctrine of space—if the phenomenal object and not the 'thing in itself' affects sensibility. But as we shall show in a following section that such an hypothesis is wholly untenable, the possibility of the explanation suggested need not be considered. What then can be the explanation on Kant's principles? Obviously only this, that there is some quality in the things which corresponds, so to speak, to the secondary qualities. This quality in the things is not colour, taste, smell, nor any such empirical attribute of objects, but it is something which so affects sensibility as to cause in us the particular sensation of colour or what not, and may therefore be regarded as a correspondent quality. In this way the relative value of the empiri-

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p 63.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p 64.

cal qualities of objects is the reverse of that suggested by Locke. To him the primary qualities bring us into intimate relation with the things, while the secondary are only subjective affections, due indeed to the action of things upon sense but "modifications only of our peculiar organization" and in no way revealing the nature of things. For Kant *all* are alike subjective but space and time are not due to experience. They are original possessions of the mind and have no relation to things as they are. The other qualities are induced by the action of things upon sense and so may be regarded as mental modifications to which there must correspond what Locke calls certain "powers" in the things.

Assuredly Kant himself never supposed that his doctrine involved such a consequence, but I do not see how he is to escape it without reconstructing his theory of the ideality of space and time.

SECTION 3. But though we have dealt with Kant's doctrine of space in general and discovered certain implications of his general theory in regard also to the secondary qualities, there still remains an important problem for Kant's theory of space. The general property of extension we have seen to be purely mind given and not due to sensation at all. What then about particular figures? Whence the great variety in the spatial determinations of objects? Are all these forms and figures traceable also to the *a priori* equipment of the mind, or does the 'thing in itself' give the cue to indicate the particular construction to be carried out?

In the attempt to answer any question concerning the function of the 'thing in itself' we are met by an immediate difficulty. *The 'thing in itself' is entirely unknown and unknowable.* It never comes within the range of our experience, and no enquiry, however careful and exhaustive, can succeed in laying bare its qualities before us.

All that the human intelligence can attain to is a knowledge of its own states. If then our questions can be answered at all it must be through an analysis of these states, through an enquiry into their origin and into the subjective and objective factors that go to make them up. In this way we cannot hope to answer the question, what are the qualities or modes of existence of the 'thing in itself'? But we do hope to be able to determine its contribution to experience as we have it. Experience is not merely a dream or mere fiction of the

imagination, not merely "a finely woven cobweb of the brain." It is the product of the mind's activity upon sensations that are given in Sensibility. That Sensibility is regarded by Kant as passive and receptive, as capable of receiving sensations only in so far as it is affected by objects. In fact sensation is just "the effect produced by an object upon the faculty of representation, so far as we are affected by it."<sup>1</sup>

What then are the objects that affect sensibility? Should it be that the 'thing in itself' is that object which by affection of sensibility produces sensation in us, then our question as to the contribution of the 'thing in itself' to experience resolves itself into this: how much is involved in the mere sensation as such? In other words, what would experience be if our minds were purely passive and receptive? If however, that which Kant would hold to affect sensibility so as to produce sensation be not the 'thing in itself', then our question as to its contribution is vain and the attempt to answer it must prove futile. In this case our enquiry would end here. For if sensation is not the effect of the action of the 'thing in itself' upon sense, we touch it at no point; and we not only are unable to answer what it *is* but we can say nothing about what it *does*. The 'thing in itself' can be nothing for knowledge nor can it have anything to do with the determination of knowledge if it has no function to perform in sensation, since the further manipulation of sensations when once they are received in consciousness is a work of the subject alone. It was on the supposition that we *can* determine what the 'thing in itself' *does*, even though we know not what it *is*, that we have started on our enquiry. Since, however, it never shows itself in experience, and experience is the result of the activity of thought upon sensation, we must look for the activity of the 'thing in itself,' if at all, in the production of sensation, and for its function in knowledge in the nature of sensation. Accordingly we shall attempt to show in the following paragraphs that the 'thing in itself' *does* affect sensibility and that nothing else does. In doing so we do not imply that Kant would consider any knowledge of things in themselves possible. It will rather be our task to show *in the first place* that the expression 'thing in itself' simply means the unknown cause of our sensations, that which

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p 56. cf. in this connection the first few pages of the Aesthetic.

affects sensibility, and *in the second place* that no external affection of sensibility takes place except through the action of the 'thing in itself'.

Furthermore, in the references which we must give to substantiate our interpretation of Kant above mentioned, the phrase 'transcendental object', less often 'noumenon', is used where we might expect 'thing in itself' if our view is correct. So it seems advisable to give our reasons for identifying 'thing in itself', 'transcendental object', and 'noumenon' in the Critique of Pure Reason before we proceed to quote passages where these latter terms are employed, in support of our contention that the 'thing in itself' is the cause of sensation. Hence the remaining portion of this section will fall into two parts. The first will give reasons for believing that the above mentioned terms are used synonymously by Kant in the Critique, and the second will attempt to prove that Kant regarded the 'thing in itself', the transcendental object', or the 'noumenon' as the ground of our sensations.

(A).—Already in the Aesthetic we find Kant suddenly introducing the expression 'transcendental object' in the midst of a discussion intended to demonstrate the incognisability of things in themselves. Just as he had been saying in the paragraphs preceding of the 'thing in itself', so he says here of the 'transcendental object' that it must ever remain unknown to us.<sup>1</sup> On several occasions throughout the Analytic Kant drops without warning from one expression to the other and continually makes use of the same language in reference to both.<sup>2</sup> In the chapter "On the ground of distinction of all objects in general into phenomena and noumena" we are given a definition of a 'transcendental object.' "Thought is the act of referring a given perception to an object. If the manner of this perception is in no way given, then the *object* is *transcendental*, and the concept of the understanding admits of a transcendental use only" etc.<sup>3</sup> This use of the categories can be of no value, Kant argues, because it can have no definite or even definable object.<sup>4</sup> The only definable objects are empirical ones, but when we step

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p 74. cf. p. 175.

<sup>2</sup> See particularly the "Transcendental Deduction" of the first edition, and the passages leading up to it Werke III pp 571 and 573 etc.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p 215.

<sup>4</sup> cf. p 216.

beyond the bounds of space and time we can not say just what an object may be like which is independent of perception. Objects of perception are phenomena, objects when "the manner of the perception is not given" can be nothing else than things in themselves. Here they are called "transcendental."

To show that 'thing in itself' and 'transcendental object' are one and the same it is only necessary to find what Kant means by a transcendental use of the categories. Above we have seen this use identified with their application to "transcendental objects." Here is what he says in another place: "What we call the transcendental use of a concept is its being referred to things in general and to things in themselves."<sup>1</sup> This seems practically the same as an identification of 'transcendental object' with 'thing in itself.'

At the end of this same chapter, in the "note on the Amphiboly of Reflective Concepts," Kant makes one of his attacks upon that Rationalism which postulates an intelligible object, knowable through the categories alone. In contrast with this he explains his own position as follows: "The understanding therefore limits the sensibility without enlarging thereby its own field, and by warning the latter that it can never apply to things by themselves, but to phenomena only, it forms the thought of an *object in itself*, but as *transcendental* only, which is the cause of phenomena and therefore never itself a phenomenon etc."<sup>2</sup> The above quotation speaks for itself.

But we have yet to show that 'noumenon' is another term for the same object. "This cannot be the case" some one may say. "Here are Kant's own words,"— "The object to which I refer any phenomenon is a transcendental object, that is, the entirely indefinite thought of something in general. This cannot be called the *noumenon*, for I know nothing of what it is by itself etc."<sup>3</sup> Now the last clause of this quotation itself is sufficient to show what Kant means here by 'noumenon:' it is something which can be known. This whole chapter in fact is directed against such a conception of noumenon as Kant himself contended for in the Inaugural Dissertation, viz., an intel-

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 211. cf. also p 212.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p. 218.

ligible object, capable of definite determination and quite within the range of pure thought.<sup>1</sup> There Kant, as we have already seen, simply adopted the distinction of Plato between phenomena and noumena, and made it a part of his own system.

In the Critique, however, no such extension of knowledge is allowable; consequently his former conception of 'noumenon' is inadmissible. And when Kant in the passage quoted tells us that the 'transcendental object' cannot be the 'noumenon' he refers to what he afterwards calls the "noumenon in positive sense,"<sup>2</sup> i. e. an intelligible thing. This is evident from the context; for in the paragraph preceding the one in which Kant distinguishes 'transcendental object' and 'noumenon,' he points out that in order to justify the conception of 'noumenon' we must postulate another kind of perception than the human, just as later on he tells us that the 'positive noumenon' is not only a problem but the mind that could know it is itself a problem.<sup>3</sup>

But Kant does justify the conception of 'noumenon' in the negative sense and it is this which we find identical in Kant with 'transcendental object.' The very notion of phenomena implies that of noumena, but merely as a limitative conception, which shall ever remind us that our knowledge extends only to phenomena and not to things in themselves. After directing his polemic for several pages against the noumenon in the positive sense, Kant says, "With all this the concept of a 'noumenon' if taken problematically remains not only admissible, but as a concept to limit the sphere of sensibility indispensable. In this case, however, it is not a purely *intelligible object* for *our* understanding, but an understanding to which it could belong is itself a problem etc. . . . Our understanding thus acquires a kind of negative extension, that is, it does not become itself limited by sensibility, but, on the contrary, limits it by calling *things in themselves noumena*."<sup>4</sup> In this passage the 'thing in itself' is expressly identified with 'noumenon' in the negative sense. One passage more will show the identification of the latter with 'transcendental object.'

In one of the closing paragraphs of the Analytic, a

<sup>1</sup> cf. pp. 24, 28 and 29 above.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 219.

<sup>3</sup> See Werke III, p. 218 cf. p. 222.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p. 222.

portion of which we have already quoted,<sup>1</sup> Kant further speaks of this limitation of sensibility by the concept of an "object in itself, but as trancendental only;" it "cannot be thought as quantity, nor as reality, nor as substance," in short none of the categories can be applied to this 'transcendental object.' Then Kant adds: "if we like to call this object 'noumenon' because the representation of it is not sensuous, we are at liberty to do so:"<sup>2</sup> for this just answers to the descriptions given of the 'noumenon' in the negative sense. Hence I think we can conclude that for Kant the terms, 'thing in itself,' 'transcendental object,' and 'noumenon' in the negative sense have the same significance. In fact in some of the quotations which we have still to make in regard to another point, we shall find him using the phrase "transcendental object or noumenon," but we must always remember that this is noumenon only in its limitative sense, not the "intelligible thing" against which he directs such a polemic in the chapter "On the ground of the distinction of all objects into phenomena and noumena."

B.—Our next task is to show that the 'thing in itself' is the cause of our sensations, and that nothing else can be, on Kantian principles. On this second point, we shall have to take issue with Dr. Vaihinger who, in the Strassburger Abhandlung<sup>3</sup> as well as in the Commentary to the Critique of Pure Reason,<sup>4</sup> holds that there are two kinds of affection spoken of by Kant in the Critique, which he calls transcendental and empirical or phenomenal respectively. The former term refers to an affection of sensibility through the action upon it of the 'transcendental object' or 'thing in itself,' the latter to an affection by the phenomenal objects in space. This "phenomenal affection" we shall attempt to refute, but in seeking to establish the "transcendental affection" we shall be guided and assisted very materially by the arguments of Dr. Vaihinger.

In support of the view that Kant believed in an affection of the sensibility by objects in space, Vaihinger quotes such passages as the following: "Colours are modifications only of our sense of sight, as it is affected in different ways by light."<sup>5</sup> "What

<sup>1</sup> See page 55.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> Strassburger Abhandlung (1884) pp. 146-164.

<sup>4</sup> Commentor zur Kritik d. r. Vernunft Vol. II, pp. 35-55.

<sup>5</sup> Werke III, p. 63.

*corresponds* to every empirical sensation is reality (*realitas phenomenon*),<sup>1</sup> and several other passages in which Kant speaks of "that which in the phenomenon corresponds to sensation."<sup>2</sup>

In regard to the first of these quotations and similar expressions throughout the Critique, it seems sufficient to say that Kant is speaking popularly. On no occasion when he uses such expressions is he setting forth a theory of "affection," and it is not natural that Kant should always adopt such language as his "Transcendental Idealism" would suggest; since this would tend to obscure the point of importance and would only appear pedantic.

On the use of the word "correspond" which has been noticed above, the following consideration seems ample justification of it in accordance with Kant's principles. Kant regards sensation as a mere subjective affection, while the phenomenon is the same sensation or a collection of them clothed with the forms of space and time and determined by the activity of the categories.<sup>3</sup> The phenomenon has thus in itself both a sensational and a thought element before it can be regarded as an object.

It seems perfectly legitimate, therefore, for Kant to speak of "that which in the phenomenon *corresponds* to the sensation," without thereby implying any such theory as that indicated by Vaihinger. Still more decidedly against such a view are certain statements of Kant himself in the Dialectic, in opposition to which no such clear statements can be found which would go to substantiate Vaihinger's interpretation. Here are a few of them: "Both (bodies and movement) are not something outside us, but only representations within us, and consequently *it is not the movement of matter which produces sensation within us*, for that motion itself (and matter also which makes itself known through it) is representation only."<sup>4</sup> In this passage the phenomenal nature of matter seems to be put forward as the reason for denying to it the ability to cause sensation. "Now we may as well admit that something which, taken transcendentally, is outside us, may be the cause of our external perceptions, but this can

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 160

<sup>2</sup> cf. Werke III, pp. 56, 347 and others.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, pp. 56, 59, 112, 122.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, pp. 608-609.

never be the object which we mean by the representations of matter and material things, for these are phenomena only etc.”<sup>1</sup>

If the above two quotations are not explicit enough on this point, here is one in which Kant states explicitly that an affection through phenomena cannot take place, that no one would ever think of maintaining such a doctrine. Kant is here discussing various theories of the dogmatic philosophers with reference to the association between soul and matter, mind and body. One of these theories is that of “physical influence,” to which the other theories raise the objection “that what appears as matter cannot by its immediate influence be the cause of representations, these being a totally heterogeneous class of effects. Those who start this objection cannot understand by the objects of the external senses matter conceived as phenomenon only, and therefore itself a mere representation produced by whatever external objects. For in that case they would really say that the representations of external objects i. e. phenomena cannot be the external causes of the representations in our minds, which would be a meaningless objection, *for nobody would think of taking for an external cause what he knows to be a mere representation.*”<sup>2</sup>

I hope that I have now shown, by means of these quotations, that Kant never intended to imply a “phenomenal affection” of sensibility. If he had, he would, on his principles, have removed our knowledge one step farther from reality than he pretended to do. For if phenomena affect sense, that affection also must be subject to the peculiar conditions of the subject affected, the qualities of the *phenomenon* cannot pass over into my presentative faculty, and all our knowledge must necessarily be confined to representations of representations, appearances of appearances, not appearances of things.

Having shown that the phenomenon is not that which affects sensibility so as to produce sensation, but is rather the product of that affection, let us now turn to the other aspect of our contention and see what evidence we can find for the view that Kant regarded the ‘thing in itself’ as the cause of sensations.

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 600.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, pp. 610-611.

Let it be understood at the outset that by *cause* in this connection is not meant the same as phenomenal or material cause. The more common expression of Kant is “*ground* of sensation or phenomenon.” Kant never reasons to the existence of the ‘thing in itself’ as the non-phenomenal ground of sensation by means of the argument from effect to cause. The reasons he has for postulating a non-phenomenal world are practical rather than theoretical and it is not the place to discuss them here. We mention this to avoid misunderstanding. We do not attempt either to criticise or to justify Kant for his double use of the term *cause*, but only wish to point out that he does use the term in two very different significations, one phenomenal or temporal, the other noumenal. Put in a few words we conceive Kant’s standpoint to be as follows: If on other than speculative or theoretical grounds we see fit to assert that there is a non-phenomenal cause of our ideas which we may call the ‘transcendental object’ or ‘thing in itself,’ then our opponent can only object “that the unknown object of our senses cannot be the cause of our ideas and this he has no right to do, because no one is able to determine what an unknown object may or may not be able to effect.”<sup>1</sup> Some of the passages already quoted indicate this point of view pretty clearly. Here are others: “As all phenomena not being things in themselves, must have for their foundation a transcendental object, determining them as mere representations, there is nothing to prevent us from attributing to that transcendental object . . . a causality which is *not phenomenal*, although its *effect* appears in the phenomenon.”<sup>2</sup>

The faculty of sensuous perception is really some kind of receptivity only . . . “The non-sensuous cause of our representations is entirely unknown to us. We may, however, call that purely intelligible cause of phenomena in general, the transcendental object, in order that we may have something which corresponds to sensibility as a kind of receptivity.”<sup>3</sup>

Many such passages might be cited to show that Kant, regarding sensibility as passive and receptive, postulates for some reason or other a transcendental object which by affection of sensibility produces sensation in us, while itself remaining absolutely unknown.

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, pp. 611-612. cf. pp. 606-607.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 374.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p. 349.

able. With all this nothing is said or can be said as to its nature, or whether it lies within or without us. "It might be possible that that something which forms the foundation of external phenomena, and *which so affects our sense as to produce in it the representations* of space, matter, shape, etc., if considered as a noumenon (or better as a transcendental object) might be at the same time the subject of thinking etc."<sup>1</sup>

SECTION IV.—It is hoped that the way is now cleared for the enquiries that follow in this chapter and the following one. For having shown that the 'thing in itself' gives us the raw material of knowledge, in the sensations which it produces within us, we have only to enquire what part sensation as such plays in the formation of our experience. What is involved in sensation when we abstract from it all that is imparted to it by the activity of the mind? I think there will be little danger in answering in a general way that Kant looks upon sensation as a chaotic manifold. "It is clear that it cannot be sensation again through which sensations are arranged and placed in certain forms."<sup>2</sup>

The point of view from which the whole of Kant's Transcendental Philosophy arises is the one we have just indicated, viz, that without the contribution of the mind, in the form of space, time and the categories, no experience such as ours would be possible. The order and regularity present in experience is imparted to it by the mind. "In a phenomenon I call that which corresponds to *sensation* its *matter*; but that which brings it about that the *manifold* of the phenomenon can be arranged in certain relations, I call the *form* of the phenomenon," and this form must come from the mind.<sup>3</sup>

From statements such as the above we are led to expect that Kant will attribute all the various forms of phenomena to the activity of the mind. Sensation should contribute nothing but the bare material, the whole construction of phenomena from this material should be brought about through the mediation of mental laws.

Confining ourselves in this chapter to a consideration of the qualities of objects regarded as individuals and without reference to their relations to others, we

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 592.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p. 56. Cf. Werke III pp. 567, 570, 579, 580, etc.

turn our attention to one special question: what has the 'thing in itself', i. e. sensation, to do with the determination of the spatial relations of objects? For all the primary qualities are bound up with space.

As regards space in general, it seems clear from what we learned in the first part of this chapter, that sensation as such has no spatial attributes; that space is but a form imparted to sensations by an intelligence which has this peculiar way of bringing order into the chaos of its sensuous states. Kant does not deny that our notion of space, like other notions, only becomes clear and definite through experience; but that view he claims is quite in accord with his theory that space as a form of perception renders experience possible. By experience here is not meant sensation but the product of sensation and thought. So through reflexion upon experience we just become more clearly conscious of what we have imparted to it ourselves.<sup>1</sup>

In what we have said on space in general or the quality of extension in objects there seems little that any interpreter of Kant would be inclined to deny. Exponents of Kant's views are not so well agreed, however, concerning what they think Kant would say in answer to our further question,—what about the particular spatial determinations of objects? Why do I perceive one object as round, another square, a third triangular and so on? Is this variety in the spatial determinations of objects due to something inherent in the sensations themselves? Or is this, too, to be attributed to the productivity of the ego?

Herbart and others<sup>2</sup> have attacked Kant's theory of space because, as they thought, such questions as we have just indicated are unanswerable from his point of view. We must confess that Kant himself makes no explicit statements in regard to the matter, but we have his general theory of knowledge before us and it is fair, I think, that we should investigate that thoroughly and not pronounce such questions as alien to his philosophy until we have discovered the implications of his epistemology as a whole. If even then no answer is forthcoming to our enquiry we may join in the attack with Herbart and proclaim Kant's theory as inadequate and as failing to account for facts. To be-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Werke III pp. 191, 582 etc.

<sup>2</sup> Vaihinger, Comment. zur. Kr. d. r. V. Vol. II p. 180.

gin with there can be only two possible answers from Kant's point of view—either the sensation gives the cue to the mind in indication of the particular construction to be carried out, or the variety in spatial forms is due entirely to the productivity of the ego. Our aim is simply to interpret Kant in this connection, not to discuss the question of Empiricism vs. Transcendentalism. And if we can show that Kant meant to attribute to mind itself the construction of all figures without any cue from the sensations as such; or on the other hand that he regarded sensation as the determining factor in such constructions, in either case our aim has been accomplished and our work on this chapter is finished.

Among the immediate successors of Kant, Mellin,<sup>1</sup> Reinhold,<sup>2</sup> and Schulze<sup>3</sup> seem to favor that interpretation of Kant which would ascribe to sensation the determining factor in all knowledge, and among moderns Liebmamn<sup>4</sup> and Riehl.<sup>5</sup> But since Riehl considers these questions in regard to space pretty fully, and his works are easiest of access, we shall confine ourselves here to his interpretation and arguments as typical of that side.

Riehl is in general concerned to make Kant's philosophy agree with the results of the empirical sciences, and will have Kant trace particular relations of objects in all cases to sensation.<sup>6</sup> In support of this view Riehl goes back to the Dissertation and quotes the following sentence as positive proof in that connection: "In order that the manifold of the object of sense may grow into a *whole* of representation there is needed an inner principle of consciousness in conformity to which that manifold takes on a certain form (space and time) in a *definite regular* way."<sup>7</sup> Now it seems to me that such a passage could quite as well be interpreted in favour of the opposite view. In fact it would seem more reasonable to urge that the emphasis of this sentence is to be laid more upon the need of an "inner principle of consciousness" than on the variety in the object. As in agreement with the above passage from the Dissertation, Riehl refers to the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Vaihinger, Comment. z. Kr. d. I. V. II pp. 180-184.

<sup>2</sup> Th. d. Vorst. pp. 299 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Kr. d. th. Phil. II 192.

<sup>4</sup> Obj. AUBL. p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> Phil. Krit. many passages. See following pages.

<sup>6</sup> See Riehl, Philos. Kritisimus. Vol. I pp. 279, 305, 306, 352 etc & Vol II pp. 33, 90 etc.

<sup>7</sup> Werke II p. 400 (§ 4 of Diss.). Riehl, Phil. Krit. I p. 279.

statement in the Critique that ‘‘the infinite manifoldness of phenomena cannot be sufficiently comprehended through the pure form of sensuous perception.’’<sup>1</sup>

What connection this passage can have with the one in the Dissertation is not easily seen, but like that, it fails to convince me that Riehl’s interpretation of Kant is necessarily the true one. Most assuredly the *pure form* of perception cannot supply all that is needed to a comprehension of the manifoldness of phenomena, for that *manifoldness* may refer to colour, smell etc., all the secondary qualities. But even if it refers to the variety in spatial relations, does Kant thereby hand the function of constructing these forms over to sensation? By no means. Kant might answer that in addition to space as a form of perception some further mental activity must be called into play before such construction could take place;<sup>2</sup> that space itself as we know it involves the action of the categories of the understanding. But with all this Kant attributes no farther function to sensation than that of supplying the raw material for knowledge. All form must come from the mind.

But let us continue with Riehl’s quotations. The following may be taken as the most important ones for his view, as in fact almost the only passages in the Critique that seem to favour such an interpretation:

“Although therefore things as phenomenal may determine space i. e. among all possible predicates (Quantity and Relation) impart reality to this or that one, yet space as something existing by itself, cannot determine the reality of things in regard to quantity or shape, because it is nothing real in itself.”<sup>3</sup> In this case Kant’s argument is directed against the view that empty space exists as a thing independent of phenomena, and remarks, as we have noted, that “things as phenomenal determine space.” But how are things as phenomena constructed so far as their spatial determinations are concerned? That is the question to which we seek an answer, and so far as an answer to it is concerned the quotation seems wide of the point. To attribute a certain function to phenomena, to experience as developed by means of the forms of perception and the categories of the understanding, is very different from ascribing that function to sensation as such. The passage taken

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 583-4.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Werke III pp. 119, 126, 127.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p. 309.

in its proper connection will not bear Riehl's interpretation.

It is the same with this one also: "This law of reproduction (association of ideas), however, presupposes that the *phenomena themselves* are really subject to such a rule, and that there is in the variety of these representations a sequency and concomitancy subject to certain rules; for without this the faculty of empirical imagination would never find anything to do that it is able to do, and would therefore lie buried within our mind as a dead faculty unknown to ourselves. If cinnabar were sometimes red and sometimes black, sometimes light and sometimes heavy, if a man could be changed now into this now into another animal shape, . . . . . the faculty of my empirical imagination would never be in a position when representing red colour to think of heavy cinnabar."<sup>1</sup> There must be a rule of synthesis in the phenomena themselves, says Kant. Riehl interprets this as an admission on Kant's part that a rule is present in sensation as such, that things determine our representations of them so far as all particularity is concerned.

Now we know that Kant's general view is that the representation determines the thing not vice versa. Does the above passage contradict it? Let us have Kant's own conclusions from the same statement, as he gives them in the following paragraph: "There must therefore, be something to make this reproduction of phenomena possible by being itself the foundation *a priori* of a necessary synthetical unity of them."<sup>2</sup> Since all phenomena are but representations Kant argues that this is quite possible and concludes: "We must admit a pure transcendental synthesis of imagination which alone forms the foundation of the possibility of all experience, such experience being impossible without the reproductibility of phenomena."

Riehl, as we have seen, quotes the above passage to show that Kant finds certain connections in experience; Kant himself mentions these connections in order to ask, how are they possible? And what is his answer? Not that they have their origin in sensation, but these very connections, Kant argues, prove that there must have been at work a synthetic activity in the construction of experience, since sensation could not of itself

<sup>1</sup> Werke III pp. 568-569; Riehl, Phil. Krit. I, 418, note.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III p. 569.

supply the connection. As he says in another place, "the connection of a manifold in general can never come to us through the senses," for "this is an act of the spontaneity of the faculty of ideation."<sup>1</sup>

The result then of our review of Riehl's interpretation is this. Some of the quotations which he makes have no bearing upon the point at issue; others can as well be taken to favour the exactly opposite view; while in others still Kant is explicitly pleading that a synthetic activity of mind is needed to render possible a connected experience of objects, since sensation as such can only give us a manifold which has no connections. This connectedness of phenomena is a result of what Kant calls "a pure transcendental synthesis of imagination," in the passage last quoted. "This is a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of the existance of which we are scarcely conscious."<sup>2</sup>

SECTION 5. Having so far found no reason to attribute to sensation any function so far as the *form* of our experience is concerned, let us enquire whether Kant tells us anything that would lead us to infer that he has *any* theory as regards the formation of particular forms of objects. From what we have already seen, we may expect to find such a theory, if at all, in Kant's doctrine of productive imagination. We have already learned from Kant that the pure form of perception alone cannot give us the variety to be found in the forms of perceived objects. We have shown further that, on Kant's principles, no element of form can reside in the sensations themselves, and that no statements of Kant when taken in their proper connections can be construed to indicate a theory which would contradict this fundamental position. We shall now investigate his theory of imaginative synthesis to see whether there is involved in it anything that would lead us to interpret Kant as attributing the formation of particular space forms to that source. If such implications can be discovered in Kant's general theory of the function of Productive Imagination, it will then be our duty to ransack the pages of the Critique in search of particular statements in confirmation of such an interpretation. The prominent place given to imagination by Kant in the construction of phenomena justifies us in devoting

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III p. 114 § 15 of Trans. Ded. in 2nd Edition.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III p. 99.

some space at this juncture to an exposition of its functions; since this will be found of great importance, not only with reference to the immediate questions of this chapter, but when we come to deal with the categories of the understanding as well.

In the opening sections of the Critique we hear only of Sensibility and Understanding as the two sources of all our knowledge, the "two fundamental sources of our soul."<sup>1</sup> Now however, as Kant proceeds in his task of explaining what is involved in knowledge, we are introduced to a third faculty which shall form a connecting link between the other two.<sup>2</sup> Its business, called synthesis, is to connect the manifold given in space and time. This is the work of what Kant calls the faculty of Imagination.<sup>3</sup> If the manifold to be connected is given in experience the synthesis is empirical; it is pure if the manifold is given *a priori*.<sup>4</sup> This latter kind of synthesis is also called "Transcendental."

Further, this business of the imagination is conducted according to rules, these rules being the twelve categories according to which the understanding is also supposed to work.<sup>5</sup> And in still another respect these two faculties agree. As we have already noticed, synthesis is the work of imagination. But in another place we are told that all connection, all synthesis must be attributed to the understanding alone.<sup>6</sup> Why then has this new faculty, the imagination, been introduced at all if it is only to do over again that which has been already done by the understanding? This brings us to consider the relationship which these two faculties bear to each other.

The solution of the apparent contradiction in Kant's statements is that the imagination is just the understanding working unconsciously.<sup>7</sup> There is thus a double synthesis of the understanding—the conscious synthesis whose products are concepts and judgments, which may be called in the strict sense the synthesis of the understanding; and the unconscious synthesis of the imagination whose products are represented to us in perceptual forms.

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III p. 81 cf. pp. 52, 82.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Werke III pp. 127, 141 ff., and 582.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III p. 99 and elsewhere.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, 99, 127.

<sup>5</sup> Werke III p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> Werke III p. 114, 115.

<sup>7</sup> Werke III pp. 133, 569 etc.

This relationship between these two faculties was apparent on the first mention of imagination where it was said: "We shall see hereafter that synthesis in general is the mere result of what I call the faculty of imagination, a blind but indispensable function of the soul, without which we should have no knowledge whatsoever, but of the existence of which we are scarcely conscious. *But to reduce this synthesis to concepts* is a function that belongs to the *understanding*, and by which the understanding supplies us for the first time with knowledge *properly so called*."<sup>1</sup> This is further confirmed in the second edition of the Critique where Kant distinguishes the *figurative* from the *intellectual* synthesis;<sup>2</sup> as also at the conclusion of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in the 1st edition: "It is this apperception which must be added to pure imagination in order to render its function intelligible,"<sup>3</sup> when taken along with the words in a preceding paragraph: "The unity of apperception with reference to the synthesis of imagination is the understanding."<sup>4</sup> Thus the understanding just brings to logical clearness in consciousness the results of what it has itself done blindly and unconsciously under the name of imagination.

A great deal of confusion is caused by Kant's not always keeping these two aspects of the understanding distinct. At one time he attributes to understanding what at another is reckoned among the functions of imagination. This confusion is rendered still worse by the introduction of a cross-distinction also. The imagination, we are told, is always employed on sensuous material. Its synthesis is accordingly, as noticed above, called *figurative*, "in order to distinguish it from that which is thought in the mere category," i. e. the *intellectual* synthesis, "which takes place by the understanding only, without the aid of the faculty of imagination."<sup>5</sup>

This *intellectual* synthesis does not seem very important for Kant's theory of knowledge, since such a synthesis, independent of all perception can have no meaning. In order to impart meaning to synthesis, the sensuous element must always be present. Thus what-

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 99.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, pp. 126, 127.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p. 581.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p. 578.

<sup>5</sup> Werke III, p. 127. cf. also p. 581.

ever synthesis is involved in experience must be directed to sensuous material; and we can in general say that this synthesis belongs to the imagination if unconscious, if conscious to the understanding in the narrower sense. Understanding is often used as the generic term to cover both conscious and unconscious synthesis. It is not our purpose to give a full discussion here of all the *a priori* functions of knowledge of which Kant spoke, and we shall accordingly confine ourselves to the broad distinction just referred to between imagination and understanding. Along with that, however, it must be always borne in mind, as we have already pointed out, that the laws by which they work are the same, those laws being expressed in the table of the twelve categories.

One further distinction, however, is of importance for the proper understanding of Kant's Epistemology, viz., that between *Productive* and *Reproductive* Imagination.<sup>1</sup> That distinction has already been implicitly made in the course of our remarks on this subject, since it rests on the difference in the material upon which the synthesis is carried out. The reproductive imagination works upon material provided from elsewhere than from the subject itself i. e. upon sensations as given in space and time. It is thus just the same as empirical synthesis; and as it is inseparably connected with apprehension, the synthesis of imagination is not always distinguished from that of apprehension.<sup>2</sup>

From this is to be distinguished the productive, which is pure, *a priori*, transcendental. Here not only are the rules by which the synthesis is carried out, *a priori*, given independently of experience, but also the material to be synthesized. This material is supposed to be something given through our own self activity; it is constructed by ourselves also by means of this faculty of productive imagination. As to what this given non-empirical material may be Kant never gives an explicit answer, but he always seems to have in mind a manifold of forms and relations given in potentiality in space and time as pure perceptions. In this way all the functions of imagination which are required to work upon the given manifold of sensations in expereence in order to construct out of them our world of perception, may also be carried out *a priori* upon the inner materials

<sup>1</sup> cf. Werke III, pp. 569, 99, 127 and others.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, pp. 132, 133 with note, 567-569.

given in the pure forms of space and time. The ego then is supposed to construct a world of forms and figures quite out of its own resources.

Kant apparently does not mean to imply that all this work of the productive imagination can be carried out before the senses are affected by objects at all i. e. before all experience. Rather he always finds the productive imagination presupposed in the activity of the reproductive. They are not two different faculties, but two sides of the same process; and since the reproductive presupposes the *a priori* and productive, the latter is also called transcendental.<sup>1</sup> This productive synthesis of imagination, this free construction of space and time relations, brings about what Kant calls the *affinity* of phenomena, in that, in the above mentioned *schematism* the outlines are given according to which the empirical synthesis of imagination must proceed in its construction of shapes and figures in sensuous perception. With his theory of the productive imagination as presupposed in the reproductive, and of both as working according to the categories and under the conditions of space and time, Kant seems to think that he has rendered possible a reconciliation of his opposed statements,—“space and time as forms of preception determine phenomena,” and “phenomena determine space and time.”

How Kant can reconcile these views, how he can speak of all this *a priori* activity and yet hold that the impulse to all our knowledge comes with sensation,<sup>2</sup> we do not propose to discuss; for as we remarked above, we are not putting Kant on trial for his Transcendentalism. We only interpret. We simply wish to point out that Kant does hold to an *a priori*, trancendental synthesis of imagination which works upon an original manifold given in pure perception, and that he makes this process the condition of the empirical reproductive synthesis of ordinary association.<sup>3</sup>

For our purpose it is particularly worthy of note that Kant speaks of the productive imagination as the faculty which produces pictures, makes definite perceptions out of a manifold of single impressions. One often meets with such expressions as the following: “The figures which productive imagination traces in space.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, pp. 107-108.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Werke III pp. 127, 569, 581.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p. 152.

"On the successive synthesis of productive imagination in producing figures are founded the mathematics of extension."<sup>1</sup> "If I say that a triangle may be constructed with three lines etc. . . . . I have before me the mere function of productive imagination."<sup>2</sup> "Motion, considered as *describing* a space,—is a pure act of the successive synthesis of the manifold in external perception in general by means of productive imagination, and belongs therefore by right . . . . to transcendental philosophy."<sup>3</sup>

When we learn that the productive imagination has such an elaborate programme of synthesis, that, out of the "original manifold of pure perception" it works up a variety of spatial figures, and that in doing all this it is the condition of the possibility of all our sensuous knowledge, is it unreasonable to expect an answer here to our question,—whence the particular figures in space? If the productive imagination is that faculty which produces figures in space, and if such a faculty works *a priori* upon an original manifold, then why hesitate to attribute to it the function of determining why an object shall appear in one shape rather than another?

It could certainly not be expected that our question should be answered fully in the Aesthetic; since, as we learn when Kant deals with the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories, space itself is not possible as a clear and definite motion but for the action of the Categories.<sup>4</sup>

We must look to the Analytic for an answer, since, as Cohen<sup>5</sup> says, the synthesis of the object alone enables us to recognize a determinate space.<sup>6</sup> So far, however, as Kant does say anything on this point in the Aesthetic it seems to favour an interpretation which attributes the chief function in knowledge to mental activity. After taking away all the contributions of pure thought and sensation from the object, Kant finds left extension and *shape* as forms ready in the mind.<sup>7</sup>

But coming to the Transcendental Deduction we find this statement from Kant: "In order to know anything in space, for instance a line, I must draw it and

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 157.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p. 132.

<sup>5</sup> Theorie d. Erfahrung 2d Ed. pp. 322 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Werke III p. 119.

<sup>7</sup> Werke III p. 56. Cf. p. 74.

produce synthetically a certain connection of the manifold that is given, so that the unity of that act is at the same time the unity of the consciousness (in the concept of a line) and is thus only known for the first time as an object (a determinate space).<sup>1</sup> Now the unity of consciousness expresses itself in the Categories; and since they are, according to the above passage, necessary in order to know a determinate space, the answer to our question must involve an answer to the inquiry of the next chapter, — ‘Does the sensation determine the use of the Categories?’ This result is what we might expect if the imagination has to discharge the function of tracing particular figures in space, since we have learned that its activity is carried on in accordance with the Categories.<sup>2</sup>

We have already seen that the synthesis of imagination is necessary even to perception, that consequently the senses alone cannot give us *perception* even, without their being accompanied by the functions of thought. Now in Section 26 of the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in the 2nd Edition of the Critique this idea is still more clearly enforced. Here we are told that perception would be impossible without the action of the Categories, and, in a note, that space represented as an object (and when thus represented it becomes a determinate space) presupposes a synthesis which the senses cannot give.<sup>3</sup> The following example introduced here by Kant is of interest to us: ‘If, for instance, I raise the empirical perception of a house, through the apprehension of the manifold contained therein, into a sensuous perception (*Wahrnehmung*), the necessary unity of space and of external sensuous perception in general is presupposed, and I draw as it were the shape of the house according to that synthetical unity of the manifold in space. But this very synthetic unity, if I make abstraction of the form of space, has its seat in the understanding, and is in fact the category of the synthesis of the homogeneous in perception in general: that is, the category of quantity, to which that synthesis of apprehension, i. e. the perception, must always conform.’<sup>4</sup> In a footnote this same synthesis is spoken of as belonging to the imagination.

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 40-41 above.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III pp. 131, 133.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, pp. 132-133. Cf. Werke III, p. 579 note, where it is claimed that imagination is a necessary ingredient in perception.

These last quotations seem to indicate that Kant would trace the determinate in spatial relations, as well as space as a mere form of perception, to the productive activity of the ego. Kant certainly tells us that a synthesis of the imagination gives us the empirical perception in its determinateness; and since a productive imagination is presupposed as the condition of a reproductive, and since this productive imagination works up figures out of the manifold given originally (in some sense or other) in perception, a natural conclusion is that Kant would ascribe the particular figures in space to the activity of imagination.

Of course Kant does not give an explicit answer to the question, how this or that faculty accomplishes its work, he does not give a history of particular figures: nor can he be called upon to do so, since he is dealing not with Psychology but with Epistemology.<sup>1</sup> Hence he does not pretend to bring pictures before us in illustration of the process by which the mind works up all the materials given chaotically in sense into the ordered whole of experience. Kant is simply concerned in discovering what processes are involved in the production of experience; and one which he thinks plays a very important part is the faculty of productive imagination. We are of opinion that in Kant's theory of this faculty are implied his answer to the question which has chiefly concerned us in this chapter.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cohen, *Theorie der Erfahrung*, pp. 323 ff.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE FUNCTION OF THE 'THING IN ITSELF' IN DETERMINING THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE CATEGORIES OF THE UNDERSTANDING.

SECTION 1. In the preceding chapter we enquired into the function assigned by Kant to the 'thing in itself' with particular reference to the spatial relations of the objects of experience. In regard to space in general, or the quality of extension in objects, we found Kant explicit in his contention that space cannot be a quality of things in themselves, that it cannot even be the mind's way of reading off a corresponding quality in things. It is rather, Kant thinks, only a *form* of perception inherent in the nature of the mind, which renders our experience of objects in space possible.<sup>1</sup>

When, however, we came to consider his views on the origin of particular forms in space, that explicitness was found to be wanting, and we were compelled to seek his answer in what seemed to us to be the necessary implications of his theory of knowledge. One of the conclusions arrived at during the course of this latter enquiry was that, on Kant's principles, all determinateness in the spatial relations of objects involves the activity, not only of the form of perception called space, but of the categories or concepts of the understanding as well.<sup>2</sup> We thus found ourselves compelled to rest satisfied with a partial answer to our question in the preceding chapter and to look forward to a fuller and more positive answer in this. The results of this chapter must either confirm or reverse the conclusions of the former.

While, however, the results of this chapter must be looked upon as the most important and decisive for our whole enquiry, yet we trust that some points have been settled already and that consequently some important results of Chapter II may be safely employed here as a basis for further discussion. In the first place we have seen that the 'thing in itself' may be regarded as the cause or ground of our sensations,<sup>3</sup> and that, as a conse-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 34 ff. above.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pp. 91-93.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. pp. 30 ff. above.

quence of this, the question as to the function of the 'thing in itself' resolves itself into another, viz.: What is involved in sensation as such? We have already sought to answer this question for the spatial relations of objects so far as possible within the limits of the preceding chapter. We have now further to enquire what is involved in sensation from the point of view of the Categories of the understanding. Do the Categories bring order into the chaos of sensation, or does the sensation give the cue to the Categories, i. e., does it contain order implicitly in itself? Or does Kant, while looking upon sensation in general as a chaotic manifold, yet so far contradict this fundamental position as to attribute to sensation itself the innate power of decision as to which of the several categories shall be employed in any particular case?

In seeking to answer any or all of these questions we shall repeatedly call to our aid other results of our previous discussions. The function of the faculty of *productive imagination* has already been quite fully discussed, and it has been found to be of great significance for Kant's theory of knowledge. It is the faculty of unconscious synthesis, and the rules followed in that synthesis are the categories of the understanding. "However strange, therefore, it may appear at first, it must nevertheless have become clear by this time that the *affinity* of phenomena and with it their *association*, and through that, lastly, their *reproduction* also according to laws, that is *the whole of our experience*, becomes possible only by means of that transcendental function of imagination without which no concepts of objects could ever come together in one experience."<sup>1</sup> This synthesis of the imagination does not yet give us true knowledge. Through its unconscious activity the imagination does bring about order in our perceptions, "but to reduce this synthesis to concepts is a function that belongs to the understanding and by which the understanding supplies us for the first time with knowledge properly so called."<sup>2</sup> The imagination, therefore, does blindly and unconsciously what the understanding does clearly and consciously.

Furthermore, the imagination is active in percep-

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III p. 581.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III p. 99. Cf. pp. 40 ff. of this thesis.

tion itself; we could not even have perception without the synthesizing power of productive imagination. And since this faculty works according to the categories, we may conclude that no definite perception can come to our minds which has not been previously (in a logical sense) worked upon by the categories of the understanding. These results arrived at in the course of our previous inquiries, need not be further discussed in this chapter but we shall refer to them as already established.

Coming now to a consideration of the problem immediately before us, we have to enquire what function sensation has in calling forth the action of the categories. In this enquiry we shall follow in general the plan of the preceding chapter i. e. we shall first seek to discover Kant's general attitude to sensation and the relation which the categories bear to it: afterwards we shall consider his answer, explicit or implied, to the more special questions that arise in connection with this part of our study.

While dealing with space we tried to establish through quotations that Kant looks upon sensation in general as a chaotic manifold, without form of any kind,<sup>1</sup> and that one of the elements of form is the spatial quality imparted to objects by the nature of sensibility. Here we shall see further that space alone as the pure form of sensuous perception is inadequate to the task of completely unifying experience, and that the categories are employed to bring about that result. For this purpose we shall make numerous quotations from the "Transcendental Deduction of the Categories" in both *first* and *second* editions of the Critique, and from other portions of this work and from the Prolegomena so far as these appear to substantiate or contradict the position taken by Kant in the "Transcendental Deduction." The Deduction however will be regarded as of chief importance for our enquiry, and other passages will be interpreted in the light of the standpoint there adopted rather than vice versa.

SECTION II. What then is the standpoint of the Critique in those portions that deal particularly with the employment of the categories in the formation of experience? What is the *spirit* and *method* of their Transcendental Deduction? Its keynote is given by Kant in the following words: "It is really a sufficient deduction

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. pp. 25 ff.

of them (the categories) and a justification of their objective validity, if we succeed in proving that by them alone an object can be thought.”<sup>1</sup> Again Kant says: “Receptivity can make knowledge possible only when joined with Spontaneity.”<sup>2</sup> The business of the senses, we are told again and again, is to receive impressions according as they are affected by objects, while that of the understanding is to think, to construct an orderly world of objects out of the raw material provided in sensation.

It is in this way that the understanding is so often referred to as the “law-giver of nature;”<sup>3</sup> for nature, according to Kant, means “the coherence of phenomena in their existence according to necessary rules or laws.”<sup>4</sup> “It is we, therefore, who carry into the phenomena which we call nature all order and regularity, nay, we should never find them in nature, if we ourselves or the nature of our mind had not originally placed them there.”<sup>5</sup>

Making use of the results already arrived at we may say that Kant attributes to the *productive imagination* the function of *placing* the laws (i. e. the categories) in the phenomena of nature, and this *a priori* activity of imagination renders possible our observation of those laws in experience. To bring these laws to consciousness, to produce knowledge properly so called is the work of the understanding. The synthesis and the laws of its activity are in both cases the same. The categories are the modes of synthesis just as they are the forms of analytic judgment. Using the term Understanding in its wider significance to include both understanding and imagination, we may say that Kant finds in understanding the source of all the formal side of the phenomena of nature. “As possible experience therefore all phenomena depend *a priori* on the understanding and receive their formal possibility from it, just as when looked upon as mere perceptions they depend on sensibility and become possible through it so far as their form is concerned.”<sup>6</sup>

From such passages as have been given above from the first edition it is clear that the spirit of the deduc-

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 566. Cf. pp. 112, 518.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> e. g. see Werke III, p. 583.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p. 191.

<sup>5</sup> Werke III, p. 582.

<sup>6</sup> Werke III, p. 583.

tion of the categories is explicitly this: "all the categories must be recognized as conditions *a priori* of the possibility of experience, whether of perception that is found in it or of thought."<sup>1</sup> Not less explicitly in the same direction are the following from that portion of the second edition of the Critique which deals with the same subject:

"The connection of anything manifold can never enter into us through the senses, and cannot be contained, therefore, already in the pure form of sensuous perception, for it is a spontaneous act of the ideational faculty; and, as in order to distinguish this from sensibility, we must call it understanding, we see that all connecting, whether we are conscious of it or not . . . is an act of the understanding. This act we shall call by the general name of synthesis."<sup>2</sup>

"Connection, however, does never lie in the objects and can never be borrowed from them by perception and thus be taken into the understanding, but it is always an act of the understanding, etc."<sup>3</sup>

Speaking of the synthesis of productive imagination which is at work even in perception Kant says: "It is an act of spontaneity, *determining*, and *not like the senses determinable only*,"<sup>4</sup> and further "all synthesis without which even perception would be impossible is subject to the categories."<sup>5</sup> And in a note to the section we are told that perception as a unity "presupposes a synthesis not belonging to the senses and by which all concepts of space and time become first possible."<sup>6</sup> "It follows then that *all possible perceptions*, everything in fact that can come to the empirical consciousness, that is, all phenomena of nature, *must so far as their connection is concerned be subject to the categories*,"<sup>7</sup> for "as mere representations, phenomena are subject to no law of connection, except that which is prescribed by the connecting faculty."<sup>8</sup>

We have given above a few of the very many passages in one division of the Critique of Pure Reason, which indicate beyond a doubt that Kant believed, as he himself said, that "the understanding is the law-

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 114.

<sup>3</sup> Werke III, p. 117.

<sup>4</sup> Werke III, p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> Werke III, p. 132.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., note.

<sup>7</sup> Werke III, p. 134.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

giver of nature." No one can read the Transcendental Deduction of the Categories in either edition of the Critique without finding unmistakable evidence that the idea there uppermost in Kant's mind is the necessity of some synthesizing activity of thought which shall bring order into the chaos of sensation; and that this synthesis must be at work even in perception, else it could not be what it is.<sup>1</sup>

Now, however, we must examine a few statements which seem to contradict this central thought in order to see whether they can be brought into harmony with it, or failing that to determine which view is fundamental to that deduction. Does Kant mean to teach that the categories are essential to the very existence of the object as an object of consciousness, or are the categories only added extraneously by the understanding after the object has been fully given in perception?

The most important passages of this kind to be found in the Critique are a few incidental remarks in the sections immediately preceding and leading up to the "Transcendental Deduction." In the first of these Kant is seeking to show why such a deduction is necessary by contrasting the categories with the forms of sensibility. It was easy to show, he claims, how the latter refer necessarily to objects, for we cannot even imagine an object without attributing to it the quality of extension and giving it a place in time. To picture an object means to spatialize it.

But in the case of the concepts of the understanding the matter is not so clear. We seem to be able to picture an object or receive it in perception without employing these functions of thought i. e. we do not always employ them explicitly. This seems to me to be Kant's meaning when he says in this connection: "It cannot be denied that phenomena may be given in perception without the functions of the understanding. For if we take, for instance, the concept of cause, which implies a peculiar kind of synthesis, consisting in placing according to a rule after something called A something totally different from it, B, we cannot say that it is *a priori* clear why phenomena should contain something of this kind."<sup>2</sup>

The last sentence of this quotation throws light on

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Werke III, p. 133.  
<sup>2</sup> Werke III, pp. 109-110.

the meaning of the first. It seems to be stated absolutely in the first, that "phenomena can be given without the functions of the understanding." But in the second sentence we see that all this means is that we are able to think of such a case: it is not clear *why* phenomena should conform to the categories. Now as Kant afterwards shows that phenomena must conform to the nature of the mind, not only to the forms of sensibility but to the categories of the understanding also, it seems reasonable to suppose that the absoluteness of the first statement is only apparent, and that the statements in the remaining sentences of the quotation are to be regarded as conveying Kant's attitude on this subject.

Following the above passage, and in line with the thought expressed in it, is a statement of a hypothetical case: "We could quite well *imagine* that phenomena might possibly be such that the understanding should not find them conforming to the conditions of its synthetical unity, etc. With all this, phenomena would offer objects to our perception, because perception by itself does not require the functions of thought."<sup>1</sup>

Here the closing sentence seems very explicit in opposition to the thought which we have found to dominate the "Transcendental Deduction" in both editions. But why not regard this sentence as a part of the hypothesis which Kant here presents? Or, reading it in the light of the knowledge which we already have of Kant's system, why not consider *thought* here as indicating a *conscious* activity of the understanding? In that case no contradiction could be found between this statement and that other which says: "All possible perception is subject to the categories."<sup>2</sup> For Kant tells us more than once that perception involves a synthesis of the imagination. But this synthesis is unconscious; so that if we interpret thought in the way suggested, regarding it as a clear and conscious activity, Kant can say that perception does not require the functions of thought without in any way contradicting the statement that perception involves a synthesis.

The synthesis involved in perception is an unconscious one, carried out by the transcendental faculty of productive imagination. Hence we *seem* able to receive objects into consciousness without their conforming to

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 110.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 132. Cf. p. 24 above with refs.

the categories, since that conformity has been brought about quite unknown to us. The conformity is undoubtedly present in all objects that come before the mind, but the fact that it has been brought about by the unconscious synthesis of imagination makes a deduction of it necessary in order to bring it clearly before the understanding.

There seems to be no reason to doubt that Kant always regarded phenomena as in all cases subject to the laws of the mind as expressed in the twelve categories. But in pleading for the necessity of a transcendental deduction of them, he claims that their applicability to all objects of experience is not so clear as is the case with the pure form of sensibility called space. We cannot picture an object without consciously spatializing it, but we can picture or imagine an object without consciously applying the concepts of the understanding. We are therefore compelled to show *how*<sup>1</sup> the latter apply to all objects of experience, and the method employed by Kant consists in showing that "by them alone an object can be thought."<sup>2</sup>

There must have been, Kant holds, an unconscious synthesis according to the categories upon all the representations that come before consciousness, for otherwise it would be impossible to find those rules in the phenomena of experience called *nature*. This is Kant's view throughout.<sup>3</sup>

There are a few similar passages to the ones just quoted in the same section of the Critique; but we shall not give any more at present, since we venture to think that the interpretation given above to those already quoted would apply in a similar way to the remaining passages. Besides we have already given this side of the argument sufficient space as compared with the quotations that could be made for our own interpretation. It is characteristic of Kant's arguments throughout the Critique that he emphasizes strongly the point which he happens to be making for the time being. In doing so many statements are made which can only be understood by comparison with the other passages.

In the case of the points at present under discussion it has been claimed by some, by Professor Andrew Seth<sup>4</sup> for example, that while Kant's attitude is at times

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, pp. 108-110.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 566.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Werke III, pp. 569, 575, 578, 583 (1st Ed.) and pp. 18, 134 (2nd Ed.).

<sup>4</sup> Lectures on Scottish Philosophy, pp. 135-136.

explicitly on the side of viewing sensation as orderless and dependent for all order upon thought, yet the passages in which he contradicts such a position are too numerous to be overlooked, and that as a matter of fact Kant's theory of knowledge finds order in the sensation itself to be an essential requirement for the application of the categories.

Now while one should not overlook any such passages in seeking to discover the fundamental standpoint of the Critique, yet it does seem that they weigh a little too heavily upon the mind of Professor Seth. He would have us think that there are a great many such statements, far surpassing in frequency and importance those which, on his own confession, indicate explicitly the opposing point of view. As opposed to this, however, we may urge *the fact* that, if we exclude the Aesthetic which all admit to be provisional in its statements, comparatively few passages in either edition of the Critique can be cited which even apparently favour Professor Seth's interpretation. On the contrary, throughout the whole Analytic, Kant but rings the changes on this one idea, viz., sensations as such being formless and orderless, the world of our representations, the phenomenal world, could not be what it is but for the synthesizing power of imagination or the unconscious activity of the understanding.

It must of course be admitted that there is a certain plausibility in the opposite interpretation, not so much, we think, because of the number or explicitness of the passages that favour it, but because of Kant's fundamental distinction between Sensibility and Understanding. That distinction Kant makes absolute. "The understanding cannot see, the senses cannot think."<sup>1</sup> Sensibility can only receive impressions, the understanding can only produce knowledge out of what is provided for it in Sensibility.

But by the introduction of a third faculty, the imagination, they are brought together.<sup>2</sup> By this means that distinction in its absoluteness is broken down, the more surely if our view is correct which interprets imagination as the unconscious aspect of understanding. And because of the fundamental and very significant functions attributed to the imagination, there seems to be no valid reason for insisting upon the absoluteness

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 82. Cf. pp. 231, 234.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 582.

of the distinction mentioned as any positive argument in favour of one interpretation rather than another, so far as concerns the question under discussion.<sup>1</sup>

So far as the "Transcendental Deduction" goes, even Dr. J. H. Stirling, who perhaps may be regarded as the greatest exponent of the interpretation of Kant given by Professor Seth, freely admits that no trace of this view is to be found. While advocating strongly his views Dr. Stirling does not pretend to find any considerable evidence for them in the Critique itself. He relies almost solely upon the Prolegomena. "Our assumption," he says in an article in Mind,<sup>2</sup> "involves also this, that Kant till then (i. e. till writing the Prolegomena), had never thought of order in the materials of sense; but that it had suddenly struck him *then*." "The probable conclusion is that *throughout the whole of the first edition*, Kant had no intention but to give it to be understood that all law, all rule, came into sense by the categories alone."<sup>3</sup>

In the Prolegomena, however, Dr. Stirling finds abundant evidence for his view in the distinction between judgments of understanding and judgments of perception. To speak of a judgment of perception is to his mind the same as to attribute a certain order to the impressions themselves. "But it is quite certain that it is only in the Prolegomena, in what concerns the judgment of perception, namely, that we have explicit notice of this order on the part of Kant."<sup>4</sup> Nor does the second edition of the Critique furnish him with anything that agrees with the passages which he makes use of from the Prolegomena. For this omission on Kant's part, Dr. Stirling suggests the following explanation: "Kant would seem to have thought in the end that it would be just as well to say the least possible in the Critique about the distinction between the two judgments: there was still plenty of matter in the book with which it would seem not well to cohere!"<sup>5</sup>

Such is Dr. Stirling's defence for confining his quotations to the Prolegomena in order to substantiate his interpretation of Kant. However satisfactory it may

<sup>1</sup> In this connection the remark of Kant that "the two faculties Sense and Understanding may perhaps spring from the same root" is worthy of mention. Werke III, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Mind Vol. 10, p. 62.

<sup>3</sup> Mind Vol. 10, p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Mind Vol. 10, p. 62.

be to himself or some others, we do not propose to accept forthwith, in this essay, a view which can only be defended by such a reflection upon the honesty of the author whom we are seeking to interpret. It would, too, be strange indeed if Kant's true views were to be found in the Prolegomena alone, and the whole of his greatest work, the Critique of Pure Reason, were written from a standpoint so fundamentally different from his only real theory of knowledge. It will be our task soon to inquire how far the standpoint of the Prolegomena really differs from that of the Critique. But just now we wish to say that if the former is found to be totally different from the latter, we shall not hesitate to regard the Critique as representing the real theory which Kant had in mind to establish. We have quoted from Dr. Stirling simply to show that the greatest advocate of that interpretation of Kant which finds, on his principles, order in the impressions of sense, is compelled to admit that in Kant's chief work the evidence is overwhelmingly on the other side.

In advocating a view opposed to Dr. Stirling's, we have so far confined ourselves to quotations from the "Transcendental Deduction of the Categories." But before leaving the Critique to examine some passages in the Prolegomena, we wish to point out some statements of Kant which indicate his own view of his arguments in the Deduction of the Categories. These will be found in that part of the Dialectic which deals with the "Method of Transcendentalism."

In explaining this Kant frequently takes the principle of Causality as an example and reminds his readers of his own, which, he thinks, is the only method of proof. "It has this peculiarity that it first renders its own proof, namely, experience possible, and *has always to be presupposed for the sake of experience.*"<sup>1</sup> "What our proof really shows is, that experience itself and therefore the object of experience would be *impossible* without such a (causal) connection."<sup>2</sup>

Again in speaking of the peculiarity of trancendental proofs, viz., that *only one* proof can be given for a transcendental proposition, he cites the proof of causality as an instance of this general law:

"In the Trancendental Analytic, for instance, we

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<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 492.

<sup>2</sup> Werke III, p. 518.

had deduced the principle that everything which happens has a cause from the *single* condition of the objective possibility of the concept of an event in general, namely, that the determination of any event in time, and therefore of this event also, as belonging to experience would be impossible unless it were subject to such a dynamical rule. This is therefore the only possible proof, etc.<sup>1</sup>

From such passages as the above we see in what way Kant himself looked upon the method of his discussions in the earlier portions of the Critique. All or any of the transcendental principles can be proved only by showing that they render experience possible. Such a proof could have no validity, and would not be at all necessary, if sensations themselves had that order which is found in experience. It is simply because Kant looks upon the materials of sense as without law or order in themselves, that he judges the activity of the categories to be necessary in the formation of experience as we have it.

SECTION III.—Let us now turn to Kant's treatment of the Categories in the Prolegomena.<sup>2</sup> The deduction here given is manifestly different, on the surface at least, from the one which we have considered in the Critique. This is seen at once in the statement of the problem, i. e. in the method by which the categories are to be deduced. "How is pure Natural Science possible?"<sup>3</sup> asks Kant in the opening section to the deduction of the Prolegomena; while, as we have seen, the question asked in the Critique is: "How is experience possible?" And although Kant says later on in the Prolegomena<sup>4</sup> that the two questions are practically the same, yet I think we shall see that this difference in statement does, to some extent, determine the difference in the method of treatment.

Knowledge in the form of a Natural Science must be made up of clearly formulated laws, *explicitly* applicable to the data in hand. Experience, on the other hand, may or may not consist of laws so clearly defined in consciousness. Thus we might distinguish *ordinary* and *scientific* experience, and the distinction would be very much the same as Kant makes in the Prolegomena

<sup>1</sup> Werke III, p. 521.

<sup>2</sup> Werke IV, pp. 43-54.

<sup>3</sup> Werke IV, p. 43. Cf. also pp. 26, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Werke IV, p. 45.

between *judgments of perception* and *judgments of experience*.<sup>1</sup> The latter only belong to Science.

Now while in the Critique no sharp line of distinction was drawn, still less preserved, between these two kinds of experience, we have seen that a large part of the "Transcendental Deduction" was concerned to investigate the *unconscious* contribution of the mind to experience through the synthesis of imagination. In those sections of the deduction it might have been said that Kant's question was: "How is ordinary experience, that of the ordinary man, possible?" It is possible, he would answer, because the faculty of productive imagination is ever at work in weaving experience out of the raw material provided in sense. Sensation alone could not give us experience, but all unknown to us there is a continued activity of imagination which, by directing its *a priori* synthesis to the impressions of sense, gives us experience as we have it. But because this synthesis is *a priori* and unconscious, we are easily led to believe that the order present in experience is due to the sensations themselves. In reality, however, we could not even have *perceptions* of objects but for this function of the imagination.

The understanding, however, is still needed in order to complete the work done by imagination i. e. to reduce this unconscious synthesis to concepts and thus bring about knowledge properly so called. This, I should think, Kant might very well have called scientific experience or scientific knowledge, as distinct from ordinary experience which is the result of imaginative synthesis. And these two kinds of experience, implicitly present in the Critique, seem to correspond to the two kinds of judgment in the Prolegomena. The experience of the ordinary man consists of *judgments of perception*. The *judgments of experience*, on the other hand, make up the sum total of natural science. The latter only carry with them a conscious necessity. Such judgments of experience, Kant claims, can only arise through addition to those of perception of a contribution from the understanding. For without this activity on the part of the understanding we could only say that an event, for instance, so happens, not that it *must* so happen.<sup>2</sup> In the judgments of perception, no

<sup>1</sup> Werke IV, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Werke IV, pp. 49, 50 note.

thought is present as to what other persons would think of such judgments, but when one has arrived at a judgment of experience, one feels that every person must agree with it, that it is necessarily and universally valid.<sup>1</sup>

This difference in the aim and method of the Prolegomena as compared with the Critique being clearly before us, we are prepared to expect statements in the deductions of the one that differ considerably from those of the other, and such differences are to be found. Here is an instance from the Prolegomena of Kant's distinction between the two kinds of judgment already referred to:

"That the room is warm, the sugar sweet, etc., are merely *subjectively* valid judgments. I do not expect that I shall always or that every other person will find them as I do now. They only express a reference of two sensations to the same subject, namely, *myself*, and that only in my present state of perception, and are not therefore valid of objects. I call these judgments of perception. With judgments of experience the case is altogether different. What experience teaches me under certain circumstances, it must teach me at all times and every other person as well; its validity is not limited to the subject or to the state of the latter at a particular time. . . . I insist, that is, that I at all times and every other person shall necessarily so combine the same perceptions under the same circumstances."<sup>2</sup> Kant goes on to argue that it is only by means of the categories of the understanding that the subjective judgments spoken of above can be transformed into objective judgments. "When through the conception of the understanding the connection of the presentations given to our sensibility through the latter is determined as universally valid, the object is determined by this relation and the judgment is objective."<sup>3</sup>

Now while in its statement the Prolegomena differs, in the passages quoted, from the statement of the Critique, the difference between the two does not seem to be so serious as the letter of the text would indicate. We have already seen that, on the principles of the Critique, a distinction is possible between ordinary and scientific knowledge which would correspond to subjec-

<sup>1</sup> Werke IV, pp. 47 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Werke IV, p. 48.

<sup>3</sup> Werke IV, p. 48.

tive and objective judgments respectively, interpreting objective to mean necessarily and universally valid, valid for all times and all places.<sup>1</sup> Nor need the statement that all our judgments are at first judgments of perception<sup>2</sup> be regarded as alien to the spirit of the Critique, on our interpretation of the distinction between these two kinds of judgment. For Kant never seeks to deny, but on the contrary strongly affirms, that we come to clearer consciousness of the laws implied in experience by reflexion upon experience, that only in that way can we have true knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

But what makes the Prolegomena so hard to reconcile with our interpretation of the Critique is his apparent attributing of order, and regular order too, to the impressions of sense. Here is the passage of which Dr. Stirling makes so much when discussing Kant's attitude on the question of Causality: "It is possible that in the perception a rule of relation may be met with which says that on the occurrence of a given phenomenon another always follows (though not conversely) . . . . , but there is no necessity of connection here, in other words no conception of a cause."<sup>4</sup> In order to its necessity the concept of cause of still needed etc. etc.

In criticizing this passage Stirling says that Kant has not a word to tell us about the whence of this order in the perceptions, and interprets it to mean that sensation as such must have that order in itself.<sup>5</sup> Now while Kant does not in the Prolegomena tell us how the order comes about in perceptions, he certainly has already told us that in the Critique. It comes from the synthesis of imagination which has been at work unconsciously in constructing and bringing before consciousness the perceptions themselves. If then we read the Prolegomena in the light of the Critique rather than vice versa, I see no reason why his statement in the above passages need be regarded as conflicting with the view we have taken of Kant's position in the Critique. By calling both *judgments* he seems to indicate that there is more involved than mere sensation in the subjective state of mind described. In Section 20 of the Prolegomena he tells us explicitly that "judgment pertains

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Werke IV, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Werke IV, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Werke III, pp. 99, 107-108.

<sup>4</sup> Werke IV p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Mind Vol. X, pp. 58 ff.

solely to the understanding,"<sup>1</sup> and then proceeds to distinguish the two kinds of judgment as given above. Accordingly, the Deduction of the Categories as given in the Prolegomena does not seem to us necessarily in conflict with what Dr. Stirling himself admits to be the spirit of that given in the Critique.

SECTION IV. There is one difficulty raised by Dr. Stirling that has not yet been touched upon, viz., how comes it that one category is employed at one time and another at another? Evidently, says Dr. Stirling, there is need of a cue in sense, there must be something in the sensation which calls forth the appropriate category. Now it seems to me that before such a criticism is in order, it will be necessary to show that the various categories are employed separately, a task for which I think even Dr. Stirling would prove incompetent. Throughout the whole of the Deduction of the Categories we have seen that the argument was: these twelve categories are necessary to the construction of an object of experience. No hint was given that any one of them was sufficient of itself to form an *object* out of the manifold of sense. Of course in his treatment and proof of these principles, each one is treated separately; and this is to be expected, since each one is constitutive of a different aspect of objectivity. But this is no reason for supposing that they do not all act upon the same sensuous materials.

Such a thought is not altogether foreign to Dr. Stirling himself. In an article in the Journal of Speculative Philosophy, he attacks Schopenhauer and Caird for teaching, as he interprets them, that the category of causality alone is constitutive of objectivity on Kant's principles, and adds: "It is a glaring error, it is even a terrible error, the most terrible error possible in a student of Kant, to say that Kant held causality to be singly and alone the category of objectivity."<sup>2</sup> Again he says, "all the categories are there for no other purpose than to infuse necessity into the contingency of sense; and Kant would have been astounded by his reader lifting his face to say: so all objectivity is given by causality alone! Lieber Gott! he would have thought to himself, what is quantity there for, or quality there for, or substance there for? Is not every one of them

<sup>1</sup> Werke IV p. 49.

<sup>2</sup> Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. 14, p. 59.

wholly and solely there for no other purpose than to produce objectivity?"<sup>1</sup>

Now though these stirring remarks of Dr. Stirling are made in a somewhat different connection, I think they may be turned against his own interpretation of Kant; for in that very part of the Prolegomena with which we have been dealing, Kant's effort has been directed to an explanation of the meaning of objectivity. We simply need to quote Dr. Stirling against himself in order to show that *all* the categories are needed for the construction of the object, and that there is no question as to the category of *quantity now*, and the category of causality *then*.<sup>2</sup>

On the whole, then, our conclusion is that Kant remains true in spirit throughout to his conception of sense as a chaotic manifold; not only so far as spatial attributes of objects are concerned but also with reference to the causal and other relations of objects to one another, sensations are entirely dependent for their form upon the contribution from the synthetic activity of mind. The only contribution to knowledge from the 'thing in itself' is the raw material of sensation, which is without form and orderless.

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<sup>1</sup> Journal of Speculative Philosophy, Vol. 13, p. 12.  
<sup>2</sup> Cf. Adamson, Phil. of Kant, p. 212, note.







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